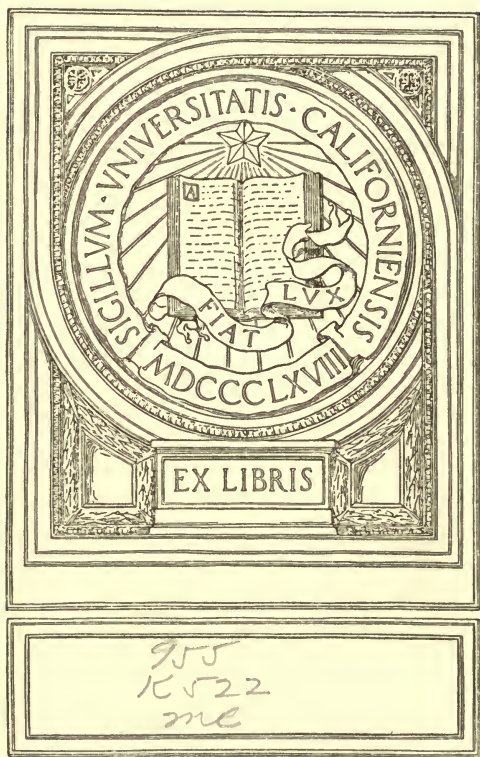


THE MEDAL OF HONOR



GENERAL · CHARLES · KING



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"IT WAS SHOULDER TO SHOULDER THAT DAY. IT'S SIDE BY SIDE NOW"

THE MEDAL OF HONOR

A Story of Peace and War

BY

GENERAL CHARLES KING

AUTHOR OF "COMRADES IN ARMS," "A KNIGHT OF COLUMBIA,"
"AN APACHE PRINCESS," "A DAUGHTER OF THE SIOUX,"
"THE COLONEL'S DAUGHTER," ETC.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY

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PART I
PROLOGUE: AT THE POINT

THE MEDAL OF HONOR

CHAPTER I

PROLOGUE: AT THE POINT

IT was nearly time for parade. The drum major in his tall lynx-skin shako was already marshaling the band in the hollow north of Trophy Point, preparatory to the march over to camp. The sun had sunk behind the westward heights, but was still glinting from cornice and window among the scattered summer homesteads across the Hudson and taking a last peep through the rift of Washington's Valley. Even the snowy tents of the battalion, pitched at the eastward verge of the "cavalry plain," were deep in shadow, though the whispering crests of the leafy square that hemmed the little white city, as well as the dense cluster in the heart of old Fort Clinton, were all agleam in the golden light. The pathway from the south porch of the hotel, leading straight away through the hedge to the "visitors' tent," was dotted by little groups of men and women sauntering campward for the closing ceremony of the day, yet here, perched on the piazzas commanding good views of the broad thoroughfare from the south, straight as a die from the grim "old Academic," and the curving road from the west skirting the northward edge of the plateau—here

along the railing lingered little beavies of bright-eyed, excited girls, chattering in hushed yet eager tones, dressed in dainty summer toilets, ready even at this early hour for the hop, scheduled to begin, *temps militaire*, at eight o'clock, and to close abruptly at beat of drum, one hundred and ten minutes thereafter. They counted their pleasuring almost in seconds, a generation ago at the Point.

It was high time these fair vedettes should be at their customary seats under the trees behind the guard tents, unless prepared to see them occupied by aliens from Cozzens' and "the Falls." Cadet beaux by the dozen, but lately in evidence, had scampered to join their companies, the last loiterers just skipping down the steps after laughing, lingering adieux—two First Classmen who, being merely high privates, had not to wind themselves into their sashes, but could don dress hat, belts and gloves in twenty seconds. Something it must be of unusual import still held so many damsels at the hotel when, all other things being as usual, they should be among the spectators at camp. "What can have happened?" "She's *got* to dress for the hop!" "He's *got* to inspect his company!" "And there comes the band now!" These fragmentary excerpts from the remarks that flew from lip to lip will perhaps furnish the clue to the situation. "It was five when they rode away, and now it's nearly seven! And there's the drum!" observed Miss Felton, wide-eyed and fluttering.

"And here they come!" suddenly announced a less imaginative maiden, drawing instantly an eager flock to peer in the direction indicated by her outstretched hand. At swift canter, through the grand old elms at Trophy Point, the riders came. At swift canter they emerged from the twilight of the grove and the screen of waiting carriages, darting into view with a little cloud of dust like the tail of a comet following in their wake. Nearing the hedge they gradually reined in to a decorous trot, then to a walk as they passed beneath the battery of searching glances along the railing. "I declare, every girl at the Point is on watch. Look!" she had murmured as they neared the hedge, and he, who had had no eyes except for her, looked, saw, flushed a bit, but all the more determinedly resumed his earnest words. He only tipped his jaunty forage-cap impersonally to the line of archly uplifted eyebrows, the pretty, questioning, quizzical faces *she* had greeted with laughing ease and grace. "West Point beauty *en brochette*," he whispered as he sprang from his horse, turned him loose to be gathered in by the impassive orderly in waiting, and stepped quickly to her side as she threw her knee from the pommel and turned, lightly touching his shoulders as she swayed forward to meet his uplifted hands. Quick, deft, and firm he swung her to the foot of the steps. There, one instant, her graceful head was inclined to his as in parting he murmured a word or two. There was a rather lingering handclasp, as all the girls, or almost all, on the south

piazza saw at the time, and all on both piazzas heard of it before parade was over. Then, barely touching the stirrup, the young officer in the natty shell jacket worn at the time by our cavalry and light artillery sprang into saddle again and shot away through the east gate and round Fort Clinton out of sight. The girl came quietly up the steps, her stylish riding habit lifted clear of the slender *bottines*, nodded again gayly to the groups along the rail, but instantly joined an elderly, richly dressed woman who stood at the entrance to the hall. "Your father has been waiting ever since the *Powell* came," they heard her say, reproachfully, and together the mother and daughter passed from view.

There was silence a moment, then up spake the Dragon of the day (Rest her soul, she is long since gathered to her reward): "Well, young women, if Senator Betts expects to marry Ethel Hoyt he'd better drop Wall Street and dwell at West Point. Now *I'm* going to supper."

They had been almost inseparable since her coming to the Point, ten days before. It was her first visit. She had spent much of the four previous years abroad; had been educated in music and the languages mainly in Dresden and Paris. Her French was something beautiful, said the girls, though they were not so sure of her figure; the average woman finding it easier, somehow, to concede to a possible rival intellectual rather than physical charms.

She was an only daughter and, in a way, a

family fetich. The Dragon could tell all about her, and did, and what she told was not all either true or pleasant, but none the less interesting. The father was senior partner in the well-known and largely advertised firm of Hoyt, Harriman & Company, in which company Homer Betts of the Manhattan Club, State senator on the shady side of forty—and politics—was believed to be a sleeping partner and a wakeful power behind the throne. Well preserved as the senator looked, he had “gone the pace,” said clubmates, and had a shady side to something besides his years and affiliations. But he had that which covers a multitude of sins, yet is not charity. He had gone to Carlsbad the autumn before, and later, when restored to apparent health, to Paris. When he went it was said that his liver was touched; when he came it was only his heart. There could be no mistaking the ardor of his admiration for Ethel Hoyt, just through with her tutelage and ready to blossom out in metropolitan society. He went over again in the late winter. He came home with them, paterfamilias being too busy at his desk, in the spring. He had encouraged one of the sons, her brothers, in his aspirations to the heart and hand of a charming girl who unhappily preferred another, and the young man went to China and a minor consulate. He had seconded the second son, who longed to be a soldier, in his designs on West Point, where he was now, at twenty-two, a “turn back” to the Third Class, though claiming Second Class privileges. He had

sought, said Betts, to make a man of the third son, whom he had succeeded in embroiling with his father to the end that there was a violent row, money matters at the bottom, winding up with the boy's accusing the family friend of false pretenses, refusing to apologize and mend his ways, and finally quitting the parental roof, he said, forever. It was a sore topic. Fred, the youth in question, had a warm heart as well as a hot head, and the mother brooded over the sorrowful breach and prayed night and day for his safe and speedy return. Father and family friend both held that he must soon weary of working for a livelihood, they knew not where. Father and friend predicted his early restoration to home and common sense, but he neither came nor communicated with them. It was telling on the mother. It was a secret torment to the father. It was a sorrow to sweet, winsome Ethel, now entering her nineteenth year, though she had seen her brother only at rare intervals during the four years of her foreign studies.

Still it was not a matter she cared to talk of—the Dragon did that, with emendations of her own—neither was Miss Hoyt in the least degree confidential or communicative on the subject of that alleged engagement to Senator Betts, “more than twice her years,” etc., but by no means an easy winner. Baskets of delicious fruit, boxes of Maillard's dainties, and “stacks” of superb roses came to her by almost every trip of the *Mary Powell*, but only once, over Sunday, had the munificent

donor appeared at the Point, and speedily left, supremely disgusted with a hotel that sold nothing stronger than small beer, and had not a room with a bath. Moreover, it had rained all day. Miss Hoyt had insisted on going to morning church at the cadet chapel, also to afternoon service (Brother Jim sang in the choir—he *could* sing), and during the dripping evening both parlors and piazzas swarmed with cadets until tattoo, and were infested with stripling officers later. Betts, in spite of the wet, spent the driest night of his life, and blasphemed the Point, the Corps, and the Army until all was blue. For a successful wooer he looked the most disgusted of men as he drove away in the early 'bus. (Many a girl was up to see him off, but not the one either he, or they, expected). That visit really revealed nothing, and Miss Hoyt was as unsatisfactory as the visit. Peaches, pralines, *marrons glacées*, even roses she would share with some of the girls, but confidences with none. At the end of the tenth day Cadet Jim Hoyt's lovely sister was still a mystery, a Sphinx, to the other girls, a belle among her brother's comrades, and an object of the undivided attentions of Lieutenant Ronald Fane, —th Cavalry, instructor in tactics and horsemanship, a soldier of good repute, and a son of a soldier, but without a surplus cent to his name.

Together had they danced at every hop, together had they ridden every day since the Sunday of Betts's unhappy visit. She had sent for her habit and horse at Fane's request, and now this exquisite Friday evening they had

dared to come home late for parade, so to speak, keeping a dozen damsels and one world-weary, hungry man long waiting.

Now, every woman at the Point could see that Mr. Fane was deeply smitten with Ethel Hoyt. Every woman could see that she liked him well. He had not been too assiduous a society man before her coming. He gave much time to exercise. He had a wherry, and rowed well for a soldier. He had a capital horse, and spent hours in the saddle. He and a classmate of the Engineers had taken many a lesson from expert hands and were accustomed to put on the gloves and pummel each other every morning as preliminary to bath and breakfast. Fane did not read much. He was no match for his sparring partner in books or brains: he was rather a light-weight in science: he was, moreover, rather below the standard in stature, but he was quick as a cat, supple, sinewy, trim built, and soldierly, a wholesome fellow in every sense, clean in thought, square in act and word, and chiefly reprehensible in being poor in purse and all too quick in temper. Indeed, it was because of this frailty he gave so much time to the gloves. Thomas Hughes and other shining lights of his schoolboy days had said there was no such training for hand and eye, wind and temper, and life with Fane had much of self training, self watchfulness.

And this exquisite evening in mid-July he had galloped back to camp; inspected, while still in riding dress,



“TOGETHER HAD THEY RIDDEN EVERY DAY”

A black and white photograph of a handwritten manuscript page. The page is filled with dense, cursive handwriting in a single column. The ink is dark, and the paper appears aged and slightly discolored. The handwriting is very close together, filling most of the page area.

the tents of his cadet company; hurried though his tub and toilet with heart alive with a thrilling sense of hope and exultation. He was late, and but few people were still in the dining room when he reached the hotel, then the summer mess room of the bachelor officers. All of the girls, and most of the matrons, apparently, had already gone to the hop. His name was on *her* card for the seventh and twelfth dances. There was therefore ample time. He had glanced, the moment he entered, toward the seats assigned Mrs. and Miss Hoyt—it had become an unconscious habit—but they were vacant. He had passed two or three groups of middle-aged and elderly civilians, prosperous looking men of affairs, and exchanged civil greetings with a few among their number whom he knew. He had noted that as one of the party called him by name another in expansive white waistcoat, gray whiskers and Tweeds, turned quickly and looked upon him with obvious curiosity or interest, an unusual symptom among these money magnates of the world.

He found the officers' table deserted except for one man, Furlong of the Artillery, who nodded with the exaggerated indifference of manner acquired as the result of six weeks' study in England. Fane was too glad-hearted to be captious, and so spoke cheerily, it being the theory in the Mess that the better Furlong liked a man the less he showed it. Presently Furlong arose, thrust his thumbs beneath the skirts of the single-

breasted frock, the uniform of the time, and sauntered over.

"Dahncing t'night?" he asked.

Fane nodded over his iced tea.

"Rahtha wahm f'r ex'cise, don't you think?"

"Don't mind it," answered the trooper, serenely content.

"*Does* depend a lot on who's the girl," admitted Mr. Furlong tentatively.

Fane thought so too, but said nothing confirmatory.

"Miss—er—Hoyt, I understand," pursued Furlong reflectively, "isn't going."

"She was, when I left her an hour ago," and now Fane, with interest, was studying his comrade's face.

"Fact, I believe. Papa's up from town in a pet about something. Heard old Scrooge there say Western Union and others had gone against him to the tune of two hundred thousand. Fancy having two hundred thousand to lose!"

"Still I'm unable to see why Miss Hoyt shouldn't go to the hop," pursued Fane, intent on the main issue.

"Oh, well, as to that I understood there was a row of some kind. Miss Hoyt seems to have gone to her room."

"They generally do, don't they, getting ready for a hop?"

Furlong allowed that might be so, but had other facts in reserve.

"I ran 'cross them on the back piazza—looked like family jar: papa in temper; daughter in tears." Then, suddenly dropping the airy tone he so much affected, Furlong came down to himself, and from that positive plane spoke to the point. "And, Fane, old fellow, don't take it amiss. You know I'm your friend. I think it's about you, and you ought to know it. I reckon old Betts has been blabbing."

"Why should he?" asked Fane, toying with a teaspoon.

"Because they say she's engaged to him—that big cit that was here Sunday—old enough to be her father. It's something I ought to have told you before, I think."

Fane sat looking beyond his friend and informant, his eyes fixed on the doorway to the hall. He was crumbling some bread in his nervous fingers. He seemed waiting to hear more, but no more came. His face had lost much of the radiance that was there when he entered. Presently, without looking up, he said, "Sit down here a moment," and Furlong obeyed. "Now, tell me—who told you?"

"Mrs. Hegeman, to begin with."

Fane smiled. "The Dragon? Yes, she'd be apt to."

"Three or four girls, *and* Mrs. Warren," pursued Furlong.

Fane looked up quickly. "Did Mrs. Warren say she knew it to be so?"

Furlong hesitated. He was one of the school that

taught the doctrine: "Don't tell all you know, but know all you tell." He believed his informant told truth, and he saw that Fane did not believe. Now, Mrs. Warren was a woman in whom they both believed. The others might have spoken, one from knowledge, the others from—hearsay. When Mrs. Warren spoke it was time to listen. Fane was slowly rising. A middle-aged civilian in gray Tweeds and sidewhiskers and expansive white waistcoat had stopped at the doorway directly opposite and was staring straight at the two comrades as though half minded to enter and address them. Fane's face was certainly paling, but his eyes were fixed upon the hesitating stranger, even as in low tone he queried, "Is this Mr. Hoyt?" Furlong, half turning, nodded. The civilian, seeing himself observed, felt the awkwardness of the situation, entered, and approached them. Fane was on his feet and facing him as he reached their end of the table.

"Excuse me, gentlemen, for seeming to stare. This is Mr. Fane, I believe. My name is Hoyt." The soldier bowed solemnly, as soldiers will. "My wife has spoken of you—frequently. I—er—gathered you were to escort my daughter to-night and thought you—she—had gone."

"I have not the pleasure," answered Fane, a trifle stiffly. "Miss Hoyt's escort is Mr. McNeil. Yonder he stands in the hall, sir."

Mr. McNeil, a cadet captain, indeed appeared at the moment, an open note in his hand, a look of perplexity

and not of pleasure on his face. A sudden impulse took Fane to the door. "Pardon me, Mr. McNeil," said he, "I have just heard that Miss Hoyt was not going to the hop——"

"It's what she says here, sir," answered the cadet, mechanically standing attention, but looking at his young superior with eyes that asked for sympathy. "She says——" and here he read, "Make my apologies to Mr. Fane and your friends who were so kind as to place their names on my card. Mother is far from well, and I cannot leave her."

It was then that the *savoir faire* of the Artillery told. "Fane," said Furlong, "I have suggested to Mr. Hoyt that a mint julep at the Mess might be more palatable than Bass up here. We are going—ahead." So saying he led his willing captive to the south door, and Fane was presently left to his reflections. Without her the dance had lost its attraction. He was strangely disturbed by Furlong's tidings. The hall and north piazza were now deserted. Almost everyone had gone to the hop. The soft music of the opening waltz came floating through the still air. Darkness had settled over the scene. The grand northward reach of the Hudson lay far beneath, its mirror surface already sprinkled with stars. Hastily he penciled a few words on a card and sent it by a bellboy to her room, then went forth into the night and stood where he could watch her windows, and stood there long. It was nearly nine o'clock when

suddenly the shade was drawn and a slender figure for a moment appeared. When again he reached the north piazza the figure was there, alone, leaning at the railing and looking out over the silent beauty of the night. She knew his step, and turned to meet him.

"Thank you for your sympathy," she frankly began, extending a slender hand that he would have been glad to hold in his had she not almost instantly withdrawn it. "Mother is better, but was and is miserable and upset. I dare say—you have heard?" and her eyes sought his face.

"Miss Ethel, I have heard something that——" he had begun impulsively, but hesitated. Then with sudden resolution leaned toward her. "I—ask you to tell me, now, are you engaged to Senator Betts?"

She looked him full in the face, neither startled nor surprised. "*That* was not what I thought you had heard—to-night. The other is far more—serious."

"This is serious enough. Is it true?"

"No, Mr. Fane. It is not."

"One more question," he persisted, an eager, almost imploring look in his young face.

"Lieutenant Fane! Telegram for Lieutenant Fane!" loudly droned a cub of a bellboy, stumbling out upon the piazza and coming suddenly upon them. Fane took it and turned again to the girl, leaning there against the white column, a filmy "burnouse" over her bowed and bonny head. But the urchin waited. "There's an

answer," he insisted. So Fane took it to the hallway, opened and read:

WAR DEPARTMENT, WASHINGTON, July 19.

Lieutenants Allen and Stennett killed by Apaches. Captain Turner on leave. Your troop without an officer. All ordered to the field. Now's your time.

BURROUGHS,

Assistant Adjutant General.

She saw his face, and came to him, paling.

"Have you, too, bad news to-night?" she asked.

"Bad, indeed!" he answered, half dazed. "Two of our best gone—killed by Indians. My troop is ordered out, and I must go."

But even then the blockhead bellboy stood his ground, and no more at the moment could be said. The 'bus, with passengers from the last up-train for the night, rumbled to the south steps. One of its human freight was met by a waiter who led him straightway through the hall and out to the north piazza where in the dim light three forms were discernible, a young girl and a young officer side by side at the railing, a bellboy stupidly staring midway across. The waiter fell back. The new arrival went forward. Neither lifting his hat nor lowering his voice, but in the tone of a master he abruptly spoke.

"Ethel, where is your father? He gave me the slip to-day."

She turned, startled, a sudden flush on her cheek, sud-

den wrath or resentment in her eyes. She turned and faced him, squarely, but for a moment made no answer. The effort seemed to repress, rather than to make, reply. Fane, too, had turned upon the intruder, astonishment and indignation in his pose. When her lips moved as though to speak, another voice was heard at the doorway, a voice that had no welcome in it.

"You want me, Betts, I suppose. Ethel, dear, will you go to your mother?"

Bowing her head, she obeyed, but at the doorway stood one moment and looked back. Fane in an instant was at her side.

"To-morrow you will be here?" she asked.

"To-morrow—surely," he answered, and she hastened up the stairs.

But when the morrow came, and with it Fane, the girl was gone. Father, mother, daughter and family friend had taken the first train townward, leaving, apparently, not a word or line. Strange stories were afloat with the crowded steamer that Saturday evening. At the Mess and on the hotel piazza men in civilian garb were whispering about Wall Street; men in uniform about the war in the far Southwest. Fane had wired for release from duty at the Point, and orders to join his troop in Arizona.

PART II

THE PATHS OF WAR

CHAPTER I

TONTO PASS

IN the blistering heat of the afternoon sun, tormented by thirst and harassed by the merciless fire of the surrounding foe, a little band of regulars had been crouching for hours among the rocks of the Sierra Ancha, grimly standing off a swarm of fierce Apaches until rescue should reach them from the distant fort. Only twenty in number when they left Danger Cañon with their prisoners at dawn two days before, they were reduced to less than ten effectives now, and the lieutenant commanding, his head bound in a blood-stained handkerchief, his eyebrow seared by the sharp fang of the Indian arrow, had already begun to count his cartridges and to pray for "night or Blücher." Every hour seemed to claim its victim and diminish his fighting strength. Every moment seemed to add to the numbers of the enemy. The great reservation was not so very far away. By hundreds the keen-eyed, quick-witted young braves could readily slip unnoticed from its westward line, take full share in the slow annihilation of the secretly hated soldiery, then as swiftly hie them back to the shelter of the Agency, innocent, apparently, of either deadly weapon or evil intent.

It was the old story of the old days before railway or telegraph had traversed the territory. Raiding parties, recruited doubtless from San Carlos or the Sierra Blanca, but inspired by Chiricahuas, schooled by such virulent foeman as Cochise and Victorio, and led by young Geronimo in person, had murdered a stage load of prospectors at the mouth of the deep, dark cañon, had burned Hogan's ranch and butchered Hogan's household. Small detachments from the nearest posts had been sent with the customary orders, "Pursue and punish." The McDowell "outfit," forty strong, under Lieutenant Blake, had chased one little gang southward toward the fastnesses of Superstition Mountain. The San Carlos guard, twenty of them at least, under Lieutenant Hunter, had trailed another batch into the Wild Rye Valley, and lost them; while a third scout under Lieutenant Fane had had a sharp fight with a third fragment in the heart of the cañon itself; had killed three, captured two wounded warriors, two squaws and some children, and scattered the rest. Then, encumbered with these charges and two of their own men quite seriously injured, they started homeward only to find the way barred by rallying bands, with the result that, after forty hours' siege, with half their number dead, dying, or dangerously wounded, they were penned among the rocks high up the southward face of Tonto Pass, their prisoners turned loose, and their butchered horses already beginning to fester in the fierce rays, in the ravine below.

They were out of water, well-nigh out of ammunition, and particularly out of patience with a post commander who would send forth so very few civilized men-at-arms to tackle so very many savages. The main dread was that their cartridges would not last until relief could come. The one hope was that Corporal Lafferty, who knew the country like a native, had succeeded in slipping through the encircling foe during the dark hours before the dawn, and could make his way to the cantonment, two days' ordinary march to the east, bearing warning of their plight. Then, if the post commander was neither an ass nor a coward, as some declared and more suspected, sufficient force would probably be sent to the rescue.

But rescue might not come too surely, and could not come too soon. The major was not the wisest man in the army; neither was he the bravest. American soldiers are quick to analyze the individual traits of their officers. The "personal equation" is speedily estimated, and, nine times out of ten, with shrewdness and accuracy. "Ould Spigots wouldn't have sent twenty fellers to do the job of a full hundred if he hadn't been scared of his own skin," was Sergeant Hickey's way of putting it when talking with his kind. "Spigots" had two companies of Foot to guard the post and two troops of cavalry to do his scouting. There were not Apaches enough in all Arizona to whip those two companies of infantry fighting in defense of the women, children, and the post, and Spigots would have been far wiser had he sent Captain

Turner with seventy or eighty troopers in the first place. But he professed to believe the "rumors" exaggerated, and so told Lieutenant Fane. It was Turner who took the lieutenant aside, before the start, and gave the young fellow pointers that made him grave and anxious—pointers that proved only too well founded.

It was his first serious responsibility. He had seen some little scouting on the open "plains" of Nebraska and Kansas, some blithe years of service in eastward stations, especially West Point, but mountain work in Apache land was new to him, and he was new to almost all the men. Only a month or so had he been with them, and there had been no opportunity to gauge his caliber or test his mettle. Old hands saw something to approve in his riding and his knowledge of drill; but those were days when in Arizona they rode little, drilled less, lived on field rations, and died, as a rule, on foot scouts. New hands comprehensively called him a fop. Ten years later they would have dubbed him a "dude," but the term was unknown in the early 70's. Old hands knew that the well-born and gently nurtured, the so-called "swells" among their officers, generally came out strong when it came to a fight. New hands were invariably confident that the contrary would be the case. But both old and new hands were at first disposed to differ from the lieutenant when he ordered "forward" after slaking the thirst of both "mounts" and men at the crossing of the Coyotero, where scouting parties from the post had

always camped for the night. It lay, however, in a deep pocket of the mountains, with commanding heights on every side—heights which might be occupied by an active enemy to the discomfiture, if not destruction, of the picnic party below. “We camp later,” he had briefly said to Sergeant Dolan, as he led the way up the rocky trail in the ravine beyond, and the wisdom of the decision was apparent within three hours, for, halting and unsaddling at nightfall, seven miles farther on and well up the range, observant troopers, looking back across the deep valley, saw the signal smokes floating heavenwards from the very heights whose shadows they had shunned. The Apache, then, was already there in force, and there, like rats in a hole, would they, the returning troopers, probably have died, cut off and surrounded. Now, if hemmed in, as answering eastward smokes quickly told them they might be, they could fight more on the level, with a chance for their lives.

But even Turner had not foreseen the possibility of a rally from the reservations. How was he to know that one of the wounded Indians, being littered along by Fane’s little command, was no less a personage than Solalay, medicine chief, seer, dreamer, prophet and high priest of the Sierra Blanca Apaches—fomenter of more mischief and possessor of more following than any war chief in the seven tribes of the Sierras—all due to his infernal rites and incantations and the superstitious nature of his people. “Solalay shot!” “Solalay taken!”

“Solalay, his squaws, his son, his brother—all prisoners, and being taken to the fort!” “Come warriors all!” “Come to the rescue!” were the words that went like wildfire through the “rancherias” and wickyups among the heights and hollows of the reservation, and what warrior dare deny him whose runners sped, crying: “Come to the gorge of the Coyotero, on the trail to Danger Cañon!” And in overwhelming numbers, though in little squads of three or four, from a dozen points along the westward boundary, all unguarded, the rescuers came. The signals told them the white chief had been too wary. He would not camp, as had been customary, on the bank of the clear, rushing stream. Even though it involved a seven-mile stumble up a rocky trail, and only tepid, brackish tank water to drink over night, *Teniente Chiquito* had pushed on, prisoners and all, to the first big fight of his young life, for at the break of dawn they had “rushed” him ten to one; had dropped a dozen of their number in the fierce assault, and been whipped back empty handed. Then came the wiser policy of the “surround” and long-range pot hunting, stalking their bayed enemy from rock, boulder, cactus, “suwarrow”; filling the air with barbed arrows and barbaric yells, slowly reducing the number of the defenders until, after sturdy, resolute, heroic fighting for over seven hours, it had become apparent to Fane that by nightfall there would probably be nobody left. To save the remnant of his force he must at least suffer the loss

of his prisoners, hitherto securely held in a crevice of the rocks. Even then neither he nor the veterans among his men had any idea that Solalay, the renowned, was one of them. "The whole reservation must be out," said old Dolan grimly, as early as seven o'clock, and at eleven every rock and bush on every side seemed to have its swarthy tenant, and every tenant either his sheaf of steel-barbed arrows, or his long-ranged but no more deadly rifle. It was a case of at least thirty to one. It was well-nigh desperate.

Farnham, Schmidt, and Welch lay dead among the boulders of the tanks; Doyle and Murray, transfixed by arrows, were gasping in torment; Fuller's right shoulder was smashed by a bullet; Higgins was shot with a Springfield .50 through both thighs, and had bled almost to death. Many another was stung or scratched, but still effective. Fane himself had a sharp clip along the right side, yet hardly noticed it. The poor horses and a half dozen pack mules, herded for safety in a little ravine below the tanks, one by one, all but four, had dropped and died, some now looking like magnified pincushions. Halfway up the boulder-strewn slope to the north, perhaps two hundred yards from the tanks about which his men were crouching, Fane had marked a little clump of cedars and what looked to be an overhanging, rocky ledge, far too small to accommodate the men and horses of his original command, but big enough as a refuge for those he had left. If now they could only get there and

carry thither the helpless among their wounded! That was the problem! Already it was occupied by several Apaches, for the exposure of head or hand on part of any man of the defense would be followed by instant flash from the cedars or the rocks around them. Kneeling by his young officer as the sun climbed toward the zenith was Dolan, veteran sergeant of the great civil war, and many a year on the plains, and to him the subaltern turned, unhesitating:

"A rush will drive those villains out," said he, "but how shall we get our wounded there?"

"Hoist them on what's left of the horses, sir, and then drive the Indian prisoners ahead of them. It's the only way. Once there we can turn those beggars loose."

It *was* the only way! With all its risk and peril, it was the *only* way! To remain meant slow annihilation. To cut through to the cedars meant the possibility of refuge for all survivors until help could come. Once there the little band might be secure from fire from the north and west, and it was worth the trial. "Fill every canteen first," was the low-murmured order passed from lip to lip, and Sutton, the boy trumpeter of the sorrel troop (Alas that so many of Turner's beautiful horses should now be lying, hoofs up, in that bloody ravine below!) crept from man to man and then to the stagnant pools of rainwater—"tanks" by Arizona nomenclature—held in rocky basins since the April cloudburst. Presently each trooper was supplied with a dripping canteen, some

of the seniors with two. Saddle blankets were spread over the stiffening forms of the dead, and a few loose rocks heaped over and about them, the only sepulture possible under the circumstances, a mute appeal to savage foemen not to mutilate the poor remains, and this, too, accomplished only at the imminent risk of life or limb, for arrow and bullet hissed and spit about them as they crawled from body to body, from rock to rock. Dolan's hat was torn from his grizzled poll by a well-aimed feathered shaft, but the veteran was destined to live to fight—and die—another day. Young Sutton cried out in sudden pang as the same arrow that uncrowned his sergeant ripped a gash in his cheek, then cursed himself for a baby, and, dropping his canteen, picked up poor Welch's blood-stained carbine and, sighting over the sheltering boulder, sent a Sharp's bullet to the rocks in vain search for the archer.

Then came the next stage of the desperate game. Doyle, Higgins, and Murray, though conscious, were helpless, and had to be carried. Fuller, though in exquisite pain, could at least use his legs and head. Three of the horses, still able to stagger, were led up from the ravine to the partial shelter of a rocky buttress close to the westward tank, and waiting comrades crouched ready to lift two of the sufferers into saddle, but poor Higgins could not hope to survive the agony of riding, with both thighs jetting blood. One horse fell before he could be used. Two of the strongest men were told off

to lift the Irishman in a blanket. It was the best they could do. It left only seven men to fight: six had to look after the wounded. Then, leaving the Indian medicine man silent and glaring on his litter, Dolan called up the trembling squaws, the but slightly wounded warrior, and a wailing Apache lad. Wondering, they arose and obeyed, though believing they were going to their death. With the butt of his carbine the sergeant drove them before him through the bowlders to the edge of the road, and from the cedars before them and the rocky slopes on every side went up a cry of mingled rage and anguish. What could it mean but that the white soldiers were about to shoot their prisoners, as the Indian would do, despairing of his own escape? For a moment the Apaches dare not fire, fearing to hit their own. The young brave had begun his weird death song. The young officer, with quivering nerves but teeth close set, carbine in hand, came crouching to join his sergeant, and then they heard his voice. "Now, men, it's to be a rush for those cedars. No matter who drops, the others must keep on. First get our wounded there, then we can rescue any who are hit. Up with Doyle and Murray, now! Ready, sergeant?"

"Ready, sir," came the veteran's answer, as, leaping to his feet, he whacked the chanting savage between the shoulder blades with the butt of his gun. "Now, you blackguard, *Ugashie!*" he yelled, and like a deer the Indian sprang up the slope ahead. The two squaws fled



“CHARGING ZIGZAG UP THE SLOPE, FANE AND DOLAN IN THE LEAD”

screaming after him, and, all in a second, Fane's little party, firing right and left wherever savage headress or swarthy face appeared, with the staggering horses, the half fainting riders in their midst, and the blanket-stretcher bearers stumbling blindly after them, went charging zigzag up the slope, Fane and Dolan shouting in the lead. Desperate as it seemed, it was well contrived, for now the Apaches fired wildly and without aim, and only from flank and rear, for those in front were curtailed by the fleeing, shrieking prisoners, expecting every instant to be shot down by their pursuers as they ran. Arrow and bullet both hissed about the poor shrinking forms in saddle, and zipped and bounded from the rocks. Cries of agony and moans of anguish alike were hushed in the uproar of the carbines and the maddening clamour of the charge. No time for backward glance or laggard pause. All eyes now were fastened on the goal, all muscles steeled for the final effort. Right and left, with streaming, dirty-white breech clouts, sinewy, dusky forms went bounding away from the cedars—too well the Apache knew the risk of hand to hand fight with the hated paleface—and those tall, vengeful, cheering, blue-shirted ruffians in the lead were rushing straight at them. There was no Indian left to hold the fort when the foremost troopers, with lowered carbines, came bounding in: then, though breathless, turning to open swift fire on the now more reckless foemen, and to lend a hand at lifting exhausted comrades into the hard-won refuge. It had

taken barely two minutes to cross that fire-swept, rock-strewn slope. It had seemed almost an age, so desperate was the peril—so fierce was the volleying—so awful, to those who had to hold back and hear them, the piteous cries of the tortured wounded. With two fresh arrows sticking in his reeking sides one poor horse plunged madly into the little space between the cedars and the ledge beyond, his fainting rider, Doyle, toppling headlong out of saddle. There was no room for quadrupeds, no mercy now for those that at any other time would have been the object of their tenderest care. Fane's heart seemed to come up into his throat in one great sob of pity as he had to strike the blow that drove the suffering creature back upon the blistering rocks, which it deluged with its blood, then dropped and died. One by one the charging troopers reached the cedars and threw themselves upon the ground gasping for breath, well-nigh exhausted. Poor Fuller fell in a swoon fifty feet short of the point, and Dolan grabbed him under his left arm and dragged him along until Scott could bear a hand in helping. Murray's horse, though shot the second time, all unled, unaided, came safely into the covert, his work accomplished, only to be driven forth as soon as his limp rider could be lowered to the ground. They saw him, neighing piteously, go staggering down the slope again in search of comrades and of water. They saw, at least some did, a blue-shirted arm uplifted among the boulders halfway back toward the tanks—

uplifted as though in appeal to the friendless brute to rescue him, the abandoned of his own comrades. Then, as they looked about them, gasping inquiry and dread, these few who had succeeded in bringing their three or four severely wounded fellows to shelter, to the sobbing question "Who's left?" "Who didn't make it?" there came the miserable answer of a poor lad, himself bleeding from a fresh arrow wound, quivering with pain and terror—a young recruit on his first scout, "It's Hayden—him that was holding Murray in saddle! His leg was broke by a bullet."

And already the besieged could see that the agile Indians, darting from boulder to boulder, were fast closing in upon the abandoned position of the tanks, upon their comrades, the unburied dead, upon that latest victim of the ambushade, their comrade, the stricken and helpless and conscious living, and in the awed and awful silence that fell upon the party, faint, yet distinct came the appealing cry "For God's sake, boys, don't leave me here! Don't let them get me!"

And then the volleying began again.

CHAPTER II

A NOBLE RESCUE

THAT was at noon the first day. Now it was noon of the second, and in those twenty-four hours the question of that "personal equation" had been settled for all time, so far as the lieutenant commanding was concerned. The caliber had been determined; the mettle was declared. From an unknown quantity as an Indian fighter and a man, Lieutenant Fane had sprung into the fullness of a soldier's reward—the love and reverence of his men; for love and even worship both they give in unstinted measure to the officer who dares death, perhaps by cruel torture, to save the humblest of their kind from the possibility of such a fate. This had Fane done in face of most appalling odds. This had Fane done in spite of vehement remonstrance from veteran campaigners. This had Fane done after Dolan had been wounded, and Sinclair shot dead in the desperate attempt. This had Fane done when reason itself pleaded with him not to dare it, and even conscience gave him pause. Were there not others to be considered?—others here and elsewhere to whom his life and services might soon be necessary? For many a day that deed became the talk of many a tongue in soldier circles all over the

West. For many a month it stood without a parallel in point of daring and difficulty, and for some strange reason for many a week it stood unheralded, unrecognized in official reports, therefore does it deserve its full meed of honor and attention here.

Hayden had come from nobody knew where, a young recruit who within the month had been assigned to Turner's troop from the last batch received from the States. He had given his age as twenty-one, his birthplace some little interior town of Pennsylvania, his occupation a clerk, and the recruiting officer had done the rest. He did not look to be twenty-one. He had delicate, almost girlish, features. He was barely five feet six in his spurred cavalry boots, and he could not have weighed one hundred and thirty, yet had he been accepted. He proved a good rider, and somewhere had learned something of foot drill and the manual. He was either homesick, or perhaps "hazed" too much when the detachment was ordered out, but he and young Ferniss, who came with him, had begged the first sergeant to let them go, and when that gruff but worthy veteran told them to be off about their business (they whipped off their caps and stood attention to, and in awe of, first sergeants in those days) they never stopped to argue, but shot for the door and collided at the threshold with a man they as yet knew and feared far less—their captain. Turner asked what was wanted, and shook his head when told. "Mr. Fane may need good shots and steady old hands," said he. It

was Major "Spigots" who settled the question in favor of the youngsters by happening in at that very minute to say to Captain Turner that instead of sending half a troop he should only send his lieutenant with twenty men. "And I wish our recruits broken in as quickly as possible," he added, "so send two or three with every scout."

Orders are orders. The captain and the sergeant exchanged glances—but no words. The two lads went, and as related, Furniss, terror-stricken at the fate of his friend, had dropped the reins of poor Murray's horse and run for the cedars, while little Hayden, with his left leg shattered below the knee, lay shouting for help among the rocks halfway back down the slope.

It was on the dash for the cedars that Mr. Fane was nearly blinded by an arrow from the left that tore a rent along the forehead just over the eyes. The blood poured into them, and much rude surgery and not a little of his shirt and all of his handkerchief were needed before his men could stanch the flow. Much water, too, was used at a time when all the command, wounded and unwounded, were taking a pull at the canteens. For an hour, while his best shots, lying prone or crouching in their little fortress, held the Apaches at respectful distance and rattled their rapid fire, the lieutenant lay on his back, quiet and uncomplaining, occasionally aiding Corporal Scott, his amateur surgeon, with some suggestion. He knew of Hayden's plight; had called with powerful voice to him whom he could not see: "Lie still. We'll

get to you presently," and now was striving to plan some way, not only of reaching, but of bringing him in. To him it might not be so difficult to crawl, edging from boulder to boulder. How to bring him up that hundred yards of missile-swept slope was the problem, yet before dark it must be done, for at dusk of a surety the Apaches would steal among the rocks until they reached him, and then leisurely, lingeringly, would butcher him with their knives, rejoicing the while in the awful screams of their helpless victim. Fane knew all about it, though this was his first independent scout in Arizona, Indian methods of torture being much the same the wild West over.

But, before he was able to see and to resume command again, Sergeant Dolan, with one gallant fellow to aid him, had made an essay of his own. It was spontaneous, unpremeditated, and well-nigh fatal to all concerned.

Hayden's cries for help had not ceased. He seemed to think it necessary to keep up the clamour, and, while it could no earlier bring him aid, it kept the enemy informed of his exact position, and only just missed compassing his death. Two of the Apaches, more venturesome than their fellows, coveting the distinction of killing a defenseless foe, had crawled, snakelike, across the road from the side of the tanks, and slowly, cautiously wormed their way, keeping out of view of the besieged, and presently the poor lad caught sight of them slowly creeping toward him, the foremost with his knife in his teeth, and then his yell for help was unearthly in its agony. It was more

than Dolan and Sinclair could stand. Carbine at full cock, they were aiming through the cedars at the bowlders beyond the road, watching for the first head to show itself. They were at the west end of the little ledge at the moment, while their officer, faint from loss of blood and blind from his bandages, lay beneath the overhang of rock toward the eastward side, Scott's nervous fingers still busily at work. "Shall we try?" muttered Sinclair. "Come on!" said Dolan, setting his teeth, and down the slope they drove, full dash for the point where Hayden lay. Instantly arrow and bullet flew to meet them, yet happily missed. They reached him unscathed. Both Indians at sight of them sprang to their feet and ran *ventre à terre*, but Dolan's bullet tore through the vitals of one and sent him sprawling on his face. The other reached the tanks unhurt. Then, between them, the two daring, devoted fellows strove to lift and carry the wounded boy. As much as twenty yards they actually dragged or bore him before poor Sinclair paid the forfeit of his devotion, and sank without a sound, shot through the brain. "Lie you here, Hayden; I can't lift you alone," said Dolan, "I'll stay with you." But, even as he spoke and before he could sprawl beside the fainting lad, a bullet tore across his broad and heaving chest and flattened on the bowlder by his side. Two more of Fane's best men were *hors de combat*, and the day was not yet done.

An hour later, his clothing soaked with blood, Dolan

managed to crawl to within a few yards of the cedars and, being aided into the refuge, was given stimulant from the lieutenant's flask, and then told his tale: Sinclair dead, Hayden half dead and now suffering for water. Dolan himself, faint and exhausted from loss of blood, was yet eager to gather strength and go again to the succor of the wounded boy. But not an eye looked into his with answering fervor. Death had won too many. The men were getting cowed. Fane's eyes were still shrouded by their bandage. Scott dare not lift it for fear of starting again the enfeebling flow. But Fane could listen and reflect and ask questions that plainly showed the trend of his thoughts. Those soldier spirits were beginning to lean on his judgment now. He had skillfully withdrawn them from a position of peril to one that promised safety for another day, perhaps even until relief could come. The move had been accomplished with less loss than seemed possible and, so long as they clung to the cedars, though both arrow and bullet whizzed above and about them, no man had been struck. Dolan and Sinclair had met their wounds in venturing forth; therefore should there be no further venturing if others could prevent it. The best troops in the world, say the authorities, find their breaking strain when one-third of their number are shot down. These men had suffered the loss of more—just more—than half. And now poor Hayden's voice was again uplifted, feebler far, and to his former plea for help was added the prayer, "For God's sake—water!" There

was not a full canteen among them. Some few were already empty. Dolan was drinking long from Scott's; his own, pierced by a bullet, had leaked out every drop. In their fevered state and in the fierce and glaring heat the wounded men were already moaning for more.

Fane signalled with his hand. Corporal Scott bent over him. "One of you shout to Hayden to be patient a little longer," said he. "We are coming to get him." And Scott, with a shake of the head at the concluding words, nevertheless told Mullins to shout as ordered. Mullins obeyed, and for response there rose a derisive jeer down by the tanks—a few loud words in the Tonto dialect, and then a chorus of taunts, yells and laughter from on every side. It's that d——d scoundrel, the Kid!" said Scott, between his teeth. "He picked up English, with his living, around the garrison, and now he's playing interpreter. — — his hide!"

But Fane was paying no heed to taunt or laughter. He was pondering deeply. Life had been sweet to him through his young manhood. Born and bred in the army, he had grown up steeped in its tenets and traditions; had gone early to West Point, a reward for the brilliant services of his soldier father, and now that father was commanding his regiment in the distant East, hoping again to wear the stars before retirement. The loving mother, and the girls, his sisters, were there on the seaboard with him, and well did Fane know with what confidence and pride they watched the despatches from the Pacific slope.

He, the only son and brother, would never fail them. The name had never known a shirk or coward. Thus far in their reports his seniors had spoken well of him. Thus far he had upheld the traditions of his House, but all had been plain sailing, so to speak. Never until now had there come supreme test, but come at last it had. Now it was for him to decide, to act, to take his life in his hands and, daring all, to do or to die. There was a dream, a hope that had been fondly and secretly cherished ever since the previous summer. Even Pet, his confidante among the sisterhood of three, had never been told. He meant to tell her, though, if all went well and the answer to his letters, sometimes four weeks on the way, should warrant it. There was a girl in cloudland and a distant Eastern State who had looked with favoring eyes on the young trooper; had danced with him rather more, and ridden much more, than with anyone else the previous summer at the Point. She was an acknowledged belle, and a partially acknowledged beauty. She had been spoken of, commercially, as a "catch," which Fane heard with inward shrinking—it hurt his chances for one reason, though there were others. Such letters as had come were pleasant reading, very friendly, quite encouraging,—just such society letters, as experienced fellows could have told him, that girls send when they wish to hear more than has yet been said, without for their part saying anything. Fane thought them charming, if vague; but then why should she—how could she—say more when as yet

he had made no definite proposition? If she knew anything, and he believed she knew much, she knew he cared for her far more than for any girl he had ever met; only—how could a man ask any girl to give up such a home as hers to dwell in Arizona? Another year, probably, the regiment would be eastward bound,—that had been almost promised,—and then, then with his captaincy surely not four years away, he might pluck up courage and go and ask her.

But meantime here was his little force reduced one-half by death or wounds, by arrow or bullet; cut off from food, friends, or water by a host of circling and savage foes,—foes that took few chances and gave no quarter. Meantime here, only eighty yards away, in the scorching sun, crippled, tortured and imploring, here was young Hayden, shrieking in his misery, praying for aid, and he, the responsible officer, had said, "No matter who drops, the others must keep on. Get our wounded there first, then we can rescue any who are hit." Hayden lay demanding the fulfillment of a soldier's promise—the keeping of a knightly word.

Then Fane rose slowly to his knees. "We must have this off now, corporal," said he quietly. "I have got to look about me." Silently the soldier obeyed, his hands trembling a bit as slowly and cautiously he removed the sodden folds. One end of the jagged rent began again to bleed. "Draw the edges together," said Fane, "and stick on a strip of court-plaster." Scott knew what that

meant, and glanced appealingly at Dolan, lying flat in the scant shade of a little cedar.

"The lieutenant surely will not try it," began Dolan, rising to his elbow. "It's certain death, sir."

"*You* tried it," answered Fane briefly, and looking about him with eyes that blinked in the insupportable glare. In spite of scorching heat how wan and drawn were the faces all turned now full upon him. The strain was indeed telling on one and all.

"*We* tried, sir, when there seemed a chance," was Dolan's answer. "They made us understand there was none. I beg the lieutenant to wait till evening, till dark, then two of us can venture down and ride him up on Higgins's blanket." From the eyes of every man came responsive pleading, from the lips of every man responsive murmured protest. From down the slope again there came, though fainter, feebler still, the wailing cry of that tortured boy. "Oh, for God's sake, fellows, help—water!" and now Fane shook loose the restraining hand the corporal had ventured to place upon his shoulder, and crawled to the edge of the shelf of rock whence he could peer through the cedars. Meantime the men lay, looking helplessly into each other's faces until Dolan spoke:

"It will take the heart out of what's left of us, sir, if anything happens to you. Let Sutton slip down to him with a canteen. The boy's willing to try."

The boy might have been—two hours earlier, but he had seen and suffered too much. There was not a soldier left

sound and stout-hearted enough to make the desperate essay, and Fane saw and realized it. "Give me my belt and revolver," was his only answer. In silence he buckled it about his slender waist. "Now, a pull at a canteen," he presently added. "No, not the flask," for Scott glanced up inquiringly. "It may have to be slow work, not a dash." Rinsing his mouth, he then poured a little over his wrists. "Now, listen," said he. "I know how firemen carry heavy men. My muscles are sound and strong, thank God, and Hayden doesn't weigh much more than a child. I'll crawl till I get to him, give him a swallow or two, then hoist him and start. You men, all of you, blaze away at every head in every direction, and I believe we can make it. If we—don't, then Sergeant Dolan's in command until the captain comes, and you can count on his coming."

Once more came the appeal from the sergeant, "For God's sake, wait till evening, sir." Once more the appeal from below, "For God's sake, come—I'm dying."

"Don't you hear?" said Fane. "That poor lad won't last till nightfall, even if the Indians don't get him. Remember the instructions now. That's all."

With that the slender, sinewy form of the young leader quickly, suddenly dove from the eastward opening, straight for the shelter of a bowlder some ten feet out in front of the shelf, and only a few feet below its level. It was done in an instant, but a yell went up from the encircling rocks—a quick crackle of shots on the breathless

air. "All right so far," his humbler comrades heard him call, and then, such as could not shoot, such as could only watch and pray, dragged themselves to the natural parapet along the trees and peered under the stiff, hot branches. They saw the lithe form flat thrown upon the sands, clad like their own in flannel shirt, canvas hunting trousers, and Apache moccasins whose loose folds fell about the ankles; saw him go twisting and squirming from the first boulder across the burning slope to the shelter of the next, even as bullets flattened and barbed arrows bounded upon the rocks about him. They saw him peering cautiously out from one rock in search of another refuge; saw him half glide, half scurry, across another patch of open space, the earth tossed in little jets by the few shots that hit close about him, and then the boulders hid him from their view. All they could do was wait and listen until somebody should tell them he had reached their stricken comrade, and then, shame-faced, Mullins begged leave to go. "Stay where you are," said Dolan, "and shoot low. You've got the down-hill side."

It was then that Dunn and Tracy, perched among the boulders at the back, with orders to keep down the fire from that quarter and check any attempt to rush them, shouted warning to the little party under the ledge. "Watch out, fellers! They're sneaking on him from down there at the road!" Then indeed was the peril double, for, even as Fane was hidden by the rocks that strewn the hillside, so were the Indians who sought to

creep forward. From the clump of cedars both parties were now invisible. Carbine in hand, Scott hastily swung himself aloft and flattened out like a squirrel on the upper level.

"I see them," he cried in eager triumph; crammed a cartridge into his "Sharp," took long and steady aim, then fired. The bullet went spat against the face of a rock not a foot from a white-turbaned, swarthy head barely protruding, and the head popped instantly out of sight. There was momentary check to the approach from the roadway, then the storm from right and left burst thrillingly on Scott. Down he came with sputter and slide and nervous laugh, but conscious of work well done, a diversion in favor of his young chief.

And then, all on a sudden, burst from Mullins's lips a cry of mingled triumph, admiration and dread. "My God, boys; look at him!" And there, full seventy yards away, with young Hayden's left arm drawn down over the broad blue shoulder, with Hayden hanging helpless on his back, half dead, yet conscious of the fearful danger, Fane staggered into view, bending almost double, but rushing from one rock to another in the desperate hope of carrying his shrieking burden through unscathed. In the torture of splintered bone and lacerated flesh and sinew, in the terror of seeing or hearing swift-darting missiles about and on every side, the poor lad could not suppress his cries. Just as a moment before he was imploring aid, so now he was madly begging: "Put me down! I can't



REDEMPTION

"FANE STAGGERED INTO VIEW, BENDING ALMOST DOUBLE"

A collection of 28 small, stylized line drawings of various insects, including beetles, flies, and bees, arranged in a grid-like fashion.

stand it! Oh, for God's sake, put me down! They'll kill us both!"

But all unheeding, relentless, grimly determined, Fane came plunging on, and every man within the refuge lifted up his voice in cheer or prayer or even execration. Every carbine barked its blazing answer to the Indian fire.

Once, not forty yards away, Fane stumbled, and down went carrier and carried upon their faces in the sand. But the young athlete was up in an instant. Again was Hayden seized and swung to the strong young back. Once again down they went, this time by design, between two rocks where there was at least partial shelter. Then came the supreme moment, the last effort, and now, do or die,—there was an open space of over forty feet that must be crossed at the run. They saw him moisten his lips once more from the battered and dripping canteen; saw the despair and agony in Hayden's woeful face; then, once again, deaf to cry or entreaty, Fane slung him to his shoulder,—that broken, bleeding leg flapping and dangling about the slender, sinewy limbs. "Now, give 'em hell, men!" they heard Dolan shout, and every eye had to turn in search of pursuers or peering, cruel faces sighting over the surrounding rocks. Then with a rush on came Fane again, and pandemonium broke loose in Tonto Pass, for all the fiends of the infernal regions seemed out for a howling holiday. Half,—two-thirds the way, despite hurtling arrow and hissing lead, despite splintering rock or scattering sand, the daring fellow bore his sense-

less load, for pain and terror had done their work at last and Hayden had fainted. Then down once more went Fane, still short pistol shot from friends and refuge, and then they saw that his exertions had been too much for the restraining plaster, that the blood from his torn forehead was blinding him again. He drew his flannel sleeve across and swept it for the instant aside, grasped again his almost lifeless burden, and plunged dizzily ahead, stumbled a third time, some low outcrop snaring the moccasined foot, yet caught himself and staggered on; and at last—God only knows who turned aside those jagged, hissing, death-dealing missiles—dropped all in a heap at the foot of the cedars, and was dragged in by eager hands, lifted in by stalwart arms, and borne beneath the sheltering ledge, gasping for breath, exhausted, yet victorious, for there, too, lay Hayden, white and limp, senseless, but safe for the day at least, with Scott dripping whiskey down his thankless gullet.

“Yell all you like, you murthering devils!” cried old Dolan, his voice all broken with strain and emotion, “but we’ve got ’em safe and sound, and you’ll never see the chance again!”

CHAPTER III

ONLY JUST IN TIME

THEN came a night no survivor of that episode, the siege of Tonto Pass, has ever been able to forget. The last drop of water was gone by sunset, the last scrap of bacon or hardtack long since devoured. It was too dark for those of the besiegers who would have been glad to steal in upon the suffering party. It was too light for any of the besieged to venture down in search of water. Three of the wounded became delirious before midnight. All of the defenders were worn and well-nigh exhausted. It was a mercy that the Apache is a coward when he cannot clearly see his way.

Just before dawn there had come a gleam of hope, a drop of comfort. The moon had sunk behind the Matitzal. The signal fires that had been burning far to the west across the Coyotero died out before twelve, and others appeared ten or twelve miles to the north. Between the Tonto tanks and the east, the direction in which lay the reservation and the fort, rose the high, rugged range that stretched for many a league, a barrier between the sparkling, swift-rushing stream they had crossed with their prisoners now thirty-six hours ago and the broad valley

and more sluggish current of the Salado, a good day's march to the east. Signals from the reservation could not be seen on the west side of the Pass, but somebody was signaling to Dolan, signaling something those vagabonds about them should know without fail, for they were being repeated from a high point across the Coyotero Valley whence both the bold crest of Sombrero Peak, the Apache signal tower, and the westward face of the Tonto Range could readily be seen. "Those signals," said Dolan, "like as anything mean 'Look out!—Soldiers coming!'" Like as not they meant that Lafferty had managed to reach the post, give warning of their plight, and Captain Turner, with lots of the boys, was already in march to relieve them. It was a cheering faith, at all events, and did much to bolster heart and courage through the dismal hours before the dawn. The drop of comfort came through little Sutton. Inspired by his commander's daring, and determined to make amends for his own weakness, Sutton, too, had won his spurs and the blessing of his fellows.

Thrice during the late afternoon he had noted that certain mountain birds, twittering and hovering over the tanks now held by the Apaches, came flying up the slope, and every time had dropped at the same spot among the boulders, somewhere about pistol shot away to the west of the cedars, yet well within the encircling lines. "They daren't get water at the usual place," he argued. "They know some hole in the rocks up here,"

Warm, stagnant, lifeless pool of rock-basin rainwater though it might be, it was priceless if only they could reach it. Sutton whispered his theories to Dolan, grimly keeping watch and ward while Fane, for a while, slept the sleep of exhaustion, and Dolan whispered back it was worth the trial. With three big, felt-covered canteens strapped to his shoulders, his revolver in his belt and his boy heart in his mouth, the youngster crept cautiously down in the shadow of the cedars, then wormed himself along on his belly through the soft, warm sand, past rock and boulder and greasewood clump, until he came to a hollow perhaps twenty feet wide, and down in this dip on the westward slope were stony basins, three or four, and in two of these, beneath overhanging rock, something was gleaming. Water! water!—God be thanked! And in trembling eagerness he shuffled down, stooped, drank his fill—drank till he could drink no more—then noiselessly uncorked and sank his canteens, noting with sorrow that after filling the three he had well-nigh emptied the first and deepest of the two receptacles. Then back he crouched with his priceless treasure, and in three minutes more parched tongues and fevered lips were praising him. Two more expeditions made the boy, unseen, unheard, unmolested, of their foe, and then, though still there was need, there lived no warrant for another trip—the last drop had been sponged up and squeezed into the last canteen. Blessed relief and comfort it brought indeed, but all was gone by noon of that second day, even that por-

tion hoarded for the wounded men, and by early afternoon the torment was again upon them.

Whatever the meaning of the signal fires, there had been nothing as yet in the conduct of the siege to warrant the belief that the Apaches were in any wise disturbed. Knowing as they did that the only food of the besieged was the handful of hardtack or bacon they had seized from the packs before the rush for the cedars; knowing that they must be suffering sorely for want of water, and hearing from time to time the sweet music of the cries of the delirious wounded, the savage warriors were apparently biding their time and taking no chances. Those about the tank, it was true, had crawled across the road, and as many as thirty or more had established themselves among the bowlders down the slope, interposing between the coveted water and the craving garrison of the little fort. Others, too, had been having a merry time among the slaughtered horses and mules, emptying saddle-bags, flour, sugar, and coffee sacks, and gorging themselves, the first in possession, with beans and bacon and hardtack. But all the time there were a dozen or more of their best marksmen keeping vigilant watch on every side, sending in a spiteful shot whenever hat or hand of the besieged showed above the rock parapets they had piled up during the night. At two o'clock in the afternoon poor Murray was dying, and Doyle sinking fast. Higgins was tossing and moaning in feverish torment. Fuller lay with ghastly face, biting into the flesh of his forearm to stifle the

groans that agony would have wrung from him. Poor young Hayden by turns dreamed deliriously or woke to full consciousness of his increasing pain and their imminent peril. He was beginning to realize what he had escaped when, in awe-stricken tones, Mullins, posted as lookout toward the south, announced, "My God, fellers, they've found Sinclair's body. Hear 'em screeching." It was true. Creeping stealthily forward, sheltered by the rocks and secure against sortie, three or four of the most venturesome had at last come upon the lifeless form, and had proceeded, after their kind and custom, to make the most of their opportunity. Their shouts and shrieks of rejoicing attracted others to the spot, and tempted one young brave beyond his covert, when Mullins stretched him with a well-aimed shot. But all the same the revelry went on. Presently a blood-dripping shirt was waved in triumph over the rocks. Then Sinclair's riding trousers were swung and flourished. Then, presently, an awful sight,—a human head was tossed in air and thrown about, and finally set up, staring with sightless eyes from the highest boulder. It sickened Mullins, and he cowered at the foot of the parapet. "There's where you'd a been, Hayden," he sobbed, "if it hadn't been for the lieutenant!"

The situation was becoming unbearable. Up the pass, to the east, only at one point was it possible to see the road. From that direction, said they all, must rescue come if it were coming, and Dolan's haggard eyes again

and again turned thither, for again it was his watch, while Fane, who had waked most of the night and all the morning, and Scott, his helper, sought what sleep it was possible to find. Little Sutton, flat on his stomach, his boy face buried in his arms, was lying in some fitful dream.

An arrow, glancing from the rock above and deflected downward, had torn through his hatbrim and ripped a furrow down his shoulder blade, adding to his earlier pangs and nervous unrest. The shrill clamour down the slope roused the young commander, and sitting up, he swept aside the bandages that Scott had renewed, and peering through the cedars saw between him and the abandoned tanks the grewsome trophy of Apache prowess. Weak and weary though he was, it stirred his heart to wrath—to swift and vengeful action. They saw him stretch forth his hand for a carbine that lay at the little parapet, but old Dolan spoke:

“Will the lieutenant look?” he said, and, without another word, turned and his extended arm directed Fane’s glance to the stark form of Murray, the dead face covered by a stained neckerchief—to still another from which the last spark of life had but that moment fled, poor Doyle, whose eyes the corporal was striving gently to close and could not, for the tears that blinded his own—to the writhing form and clinching hands of Hayden and Fuller, both burning now with fever, to little Sutton hiding his face in vain efforts to hide his suffering. Fane

saw what was meant,—saw it in the drawn features and haggard, pleading eyes before Dolan ventured to speak again: “We can’t let the lieutenant risk anything now, sir, when we’ve lost so much already.”

“Then may God bring us relief,” was the murmured prayer, unheard among the heights of the Sierras, yet answered from on High. There came a hail from the lookout post to the northward, and Dolan signed to Mullins to see what was needed. The Irish trooper was back in an instant, his eyes blazing with hope. “Lootn’t! Lootn’t!” he cried. “There’s somethin’ comin’—God knows what—only the Injuns are lighting out!”

Then those northward signals, those beacon lights on the jagged cliffs of the Matitzal, meant something after all,—something the Apaches might wisely have earlier heeded. “Lighting out” they were indeed! Far down the sunset slope of the range, five and six hundred yards away, the lithe forms, with their flapping clouts of dingy white, could be seen at intervals scurrying toward the roadway in the ravine. Glancing eastward in response to the excited shout, “Look yonder! There’s more of ’em!” Fane could see still other dusky shapes gliding noiselessly among the boulders, all heading southward. They had ceased their fire, too. It seemed as though they were striving to escape from some swift-coming force, giving no sound to guide the pursuit. Then what the enemy dreaded the enemy should get, was Fane’s instant and impulsive decision, though well he knew there were in all

their belts perhaps not thirty cartridges left. He was ablaze with excitement, enthusiasm, lust for vengeance now—he who had been so cool, calculating, and determined but the day before. The fever of his hurts had burned into his blood. The hot rage of battle was again in his soul, and it was a sudden word from Mullins that swept for the moment sense and judgment from his brain. “My God, fellows, can’t we get after those blackguards that chopped up Sinclair?” One look southward showed that ghastly head, still mutely staring at them in the glare of the slanting sunshine.

“We’ll do it!” cried Fane, springing to his feet. “Come on!” And never heeding, never hearing, perhaps, Dolan’s restraining plea, never thinking now of personal risk or possible ambush, the young officer, followed by four or five still active and uninjured men, carbines in hand, went bounding down the slope. “My God,” moaned the sergeant. “It may be only a trick, and we haven’t five shots left apiece!” And still he, too, found his feet and went reeling after them.

With a yell of vengeance and fury, the little party dashed straight as the rocks would permit toward that dead yet summoning mask. Four seconds took them forty feet on their way. Then suddenly, down went the bloody, sightless head, jerked from behind; some savage Apache, even in flight, seeking to take his fearful trophy with him. Then a dark form appeared one instant, fifty yards ahead, and three carbines barked almost in unison,

and missed. But on rushed the shouting troopers. Back came the answering shout, and almost before they knew it, they were once again halfway down the slope, again the center of at least a partially encircling, if hurried and ill-aimed fire. One Indian, and only one, they felled close to the boulder where lay the poor butchered remnants; where lay, too, the severed head; but by this time reason had resumed her sway and Fane's wits were again about him. "Halt and kneel!" he shouted. "Hold your shots until you see an Indian!" and even as he glanced about him to enforce his order, before himself seeking shelter, a sudden numbness seized his left arm, a sudden gush of blood soaked the blue flannel sleeve. Something had torn through the bone only just below the shoulder and, broken short off, the now useless member dangled dripping at his side. ,

Oh, well for Fane and his raging followers that it was no mere Indian trick to lure them forth, then surround and finish them! Oh, well for him and his that the murmured prayer had indeed been answered from on High! Even as he crouched behind the granite boulder, half disposed to curse his boyish folly, the exultant shout came ringing from the cedars: "It's the captain, fellers—the captain and the hull d——d caboodle! Hurray!" If confirmation were needed they could find it in the sound of distant shots, of distant cheering, in the sight of streaming breechclouts down the southward slope and across the road. Only a few more missiles, mere Parthian arrows,

came whizzing and hurtling back, unaimed, unnoted, and their tormentors of the two long nights and days were fast scurrying out of range, and then from a distance, with beady, hate-burning eyes, watching the reunion of soldier comrades, rescued and rescuers, among the bloody sands and burning rocks of Tonto Pass.

CHAPTER IV

NIGHT SIGNALS FROM THE AGENCY

TOUCHING that matter of the relief and rescue of Lieutenant Fane's command, there was much misunderstanding at the time, and much misstatement afterwards, in which, as finally established by patient and impartial investigation, "Ould Spigots" had led off with magnificent, though as he would have it, unconscious mendacity.

Lafferty had succeeded, after much peril, some suffering, and more delay, in reaching the fort in the dead of night—the second night after his morning start in the starlight. From the sentry at the stables he learned that Captain Turner, with two subalterns and all the available cavalry at the post, had been sent forth by the major commanding to gather in, coax and bring back the refugees from the reservation, for whom, indeed, the major was responsible, and of whom an astute agent declared, "They are simply frightened away by the threats and bullyings of the soldiers of the guard." And "Spigots" professed to believe him.

Turner had been gone forty-eight hours when Lafferty arrived. Turner had theories of his own as to whether the renegades were drawn or driven, but he wisely sup-

pressed them until beyond probability of recall to the post. Then he took his officers and certain sergeants into his confidence. He also took another trail. Southwest from the San Carlos had the Indians flitted to Tonto Pass, where they concentrated along the road to Danger Cañon. Southwestward from the post, and until well beyond Sombrero Peak, Turner obediently followed his instructions—and the same road. Then, halting for a few hours to rest and bait his men and horses, he bade one of the most trustworthy non-commissioned officers to take the binocular and keep a sharp lookout for signal fires anywhere about the Peak, now several miles to their right rear; also for answering signals from the opposite and more distant range to the west. This done, Turner composed himself to sleep. Three hours later he was up and listening with all apparent gravity to Sergeant Hickey's report, and Hickey was a regimental celebrity.

"*Two* fires at the Peak, sorr, and two way up yonder in the Sierra."

"Sure, sergeant?" asked Turner. "We may have to swear to it."

"Sure, sorr; swear to it on a stack of bibles—if the captain says so."

"Sure," he muttered to himself and to others of his coterie, a moment later, with his tongue in his cheek and a wink in his eye. "Sure as I know Corp-ril Gribble was sint to start 'em at the Peak leastwise,—an' that was enough to start 'em all over the Sierra."

“Sierra be d——d, Hickey!” laughed Sergeant Wells. “Did *you* see e’er a blaze northwest of Sombrero—where the ould man pointed?” And Wells was beginning to see why Gribble, with three followers, had been sent off to the right front ten hours earlier, when the Peak loomed due west.

“Why wouldn’t I, Wells, wid Collins an’ his hand glass glintin’ into the big end of the binocular?” and there was a shout from his listeners.

Now, Turner’s orders read: “Follow the trail of the Indians reported to have taken the road through Tonto Pass, unless there should be indications that they have crossed the Salado and are making for the Matitzal.” But Turner’s long experience in Apache land had taught him that to follow on that trail meant simply to keep an overwhelming band of warriors,—actuated by some sudden and vehement impulse,—between him and the little detachment earlier sent forth under Fane. Turner knew that Fane would probably seek to return by the Pass, that he would therefore stand every chance of being held up somewhere between the Coyotero—where he had been warned not to stop—and the crest of the Sierra. The Indians had abundant force, not only to surround Fane, but to render that Pass impassable to Turner, even though Turner had eighty men. There was just one way, in his judgment, to reach his lieutenant, and then, from the west, to turn on the renegades and drive, not coax, them back. That way was to quit the road—in fine, to disregard the

major's injunction to keep his command ever as a screen between the hostiles in the Sierra and the little garrison at the post. The old trail to the Tonto Creek and Wild Rye country led northwest from the nearby crossing of the Salado. Now, if only "indications" of some kind could be discovered warranting the theory that the bulk of the Indians had turned that way, after reaching the Sierra, there might be plain sailing. Therefore the halt to rest and reconnoiter. Therefore the doubled fires at the Peak. Therefore Sergeant Hickey's report that answering signals had been discovered up the range, and that he had not seen one to the south and southwest.

"Why would I," grinned Hickey, later, "wid Collin's caubeen between the Sierra an' the spy glass?"

By dawn, therefore, the second full day out, Turner, with four score seasoned troopers had, all unopposed, pierced the range ten miles north of Tonto Pass, had reached the Coyotero slope, and then turning sharp to the southward, made his way toward the scene of Fane's desperate fight for life, and got there, indeed, not one moment too soon.

With what followed afield this story has little to do. Leaving a surgeon, a small guard, and abundant supplies with the rescued, and giving himself barely time for words, either of congratulation or commiseration, the captain pushed on after the Apaches, most of them only too glad by this time to hark back to shelter and something to

eat. Dr. Evans gathered up the wounded officers and troopers, had them borne down to the tanks for temporary relief, and by nightfall saw them all in a bivouac a mile farther on, where a spring-fed brook came rushing down the rocks, and there had they to remain and rest in the pure mountain air until litters could be made and pack mules spared and sent back from Turner's command.

Meanwhile there was tribulation at the fort. "Old Spigots" was manifestly in the throes of blue funk. On the one hand he feared an Indian assault on the post; on the other a general raking over from the department and division commanders. The worst outbreak of years had occurred right here within his martial bailiwick, and he had done nothing to prevent it.

True, he had had scant word of warning. The first news of trouble came through stampeded prospectors. It was their account of the deviltry beyond Danger Cañon that, mentally discounted about fifty per cent., induced him to order out a half troop, and later to cut that down to a lieutenant and twenty men. It was not until two days after Fane's departure that vigorous cross-questioning of the agent developed the fact that perhaps a dozen young braves had been gone a week, overstaying their hunting pass.

It was not until Fane had been gone five days that official confirmation was given to rumors of a hubbub at the Agency. It was not until the sixth day that Spigots was appealed to by the agent to recover his

lost children, who to the number of two hundred or more, as now admitted, had fled to the westward mountains "in terror of the soldiery on guard." The agent did not even then confide to the major commanding that runners had come with news of a fight with Fane's party and the capture of "big chief" Solalay. Turner and his four score men were out of reach beyond Sombrero Peak when at last that story was communicated, and the soul of Major Spigots overflowed in rejoicing and the composition of a despatch, sent within the hour to the commanding officer at Camp Sandy, seventy-five miles to the northwest.

Sandy was regimental headquarters, Colonel Pelham in command. Sandy had sent forth scout after scout, sometimes invading what Spigots's jealousy held to be his own territory. Sandy had accomplished much and Sandy's crack scout leaders, men like Major Stannard, Captain Tanner, and Lieutenant Ray, had hit the Apaches time and again, winning the thanks and praise of the general commanding the department and no end of credit for their post and regiment. Spigots, the senior major, mortally jealous of Stannard and envious of his colonel, had failed to utilize certain opportunities; had been inferentially criticised for lack of energy, and not infrequently referred to as not only cold blooded but "cold footed," and "cold feet" in the army sense is a state or condition in no wise dependent on the temperature of the vital fluid or discoverable by the clinical thermometer. Pelham's people would

have given half their worldly possessions to capture Solalay. It would cap the climax of their brilliant exploits.

They had tried time and again without success. It had remained for him, Spigots, the weak brother, the inert, to secure the richest prize, and therefore to expect the chief reward of the entire campaign as the virtual captor of the most dreaded Indian in the game, and Spigots almost shouted aloud in the joy that possessed him when he reflected that, through Pelham himself, the announcement must reach Department Headquarters.

By swift and oft-tried runner his despatch should go forthwith. Toyàh, who knew every trail of the Tonto Basin and the Black Mesa—Toyàh, to whom Hardscrabble and the deep gorges of the East Fork and Granite Creek were but crevices in the face of the land—Toyàh who had guided General Crook, the Gray Fox, all over the territory east of the Hassayampa and had borne his messages at tireless dogtrot sixty miles a day—Toyàh could be counted on to place that despatch in Pelham's hands before the setting of the second sun. Pelham would send his courier, loping by night through Cherry Creek and the Agua Fria, landing the precious missive at Crook's headquarters by sunrise, so that within forty-eight hours the glad tidings should be trumpeted about Prescott and Whipple Barracks, and he, Spigots, be hailed as the man of the hour, the successful general of the long campaign.

And that document was almost as modest as it was misleading:

ADJUTANT GENERAL,

HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA:

Sir: I have the honor to report that on the 6th instant I received notification that hostile Indians were raiding to the west of Danger Cañon; that they had murdered several prospectors and the occupants of Hogan's Ranch. Although Camp McDowell is much nearer the scene of these outrages, I deemed it my duty to send cavalry in that direction for the purpose of intercepting and arresting participants who, in fear of meeting strong force from McDowell, would probably seek refuge in the Sierra Ancha. The fact that Solalay had been reported in the Verde Valley was another incentive, and it is with gratification that I am able to report that, through the energy of the cavalry commands acting under my orders, Solalay himself, with several members of his family, has been captured alive, after a sharp engagement in Danger Cañon, and is now on the way to this post under secure guard. The information comes through the agency itself, where intense excitement has prevailed for twenty-four hours past. Captain Turner is still afield, with his entire command, but will be recalled, as the Indian agent thinks it possible that an attack in force may follow in the hope of releasing this hitherto intractable chief and leader. I am sending this by runner via Camp Sandy, and will add further particulars as soon as it is possible to do so.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN S. PIGGOTT,

Major —th Cavalry Commanding.

"There," said Spigots to his silent adjutant, as the clerk finished the copies, "that will forestall any story

about the stampede from the reservation! Let Toyah start at once, with orders to make Sandy before sunset to-morrow." The despatch was folded in oiled silk, tagged "Commanding officer, Camp Sandy, please read and forward." Spigots chuckled over the chagrin Pelham must feel that all his efforts to "nail" Solalay had proved abortive, while he, Spigots, had succeeded. "And now," said he, "we will send over to the Pass for Turner, and tell him to bring in Fane and the prisoners."

That was about noon on the 12th day of the month. Then came the 13th, the ill-omened date in the eyes of many, especially when it came, as it did this 13th, on a Friday. The new day was barely ten minutes old, the sentries had barely ceased the midnight call, when the sergeant of the guard, escorting a nearly exhausted non-commissioned officer of cavalry, stirred up the post adjutant, who listened to Corporal Lafferty's tale while tugging at his boot straps. Then they went and knocked at the major's, whereupon Spigots himself appeared at a first-floor window (there was no second), and listened, impatient.

"But they hung onto the prisoners—they've got Solalay?" he burst in, all anxiety on that point at least.

"They *had* 'em up to the time I left, sir," said Lafferty, "though I didn't get to hear the names of 'em—but unless help could come mighty quick they couldn't hold 'em, or anything."

"Well, you met Captain Turner, of course, and warned him. He went by road direct." And with one leg in his trousers and the other poised, Spigots breathlessly awaited the answer.

"I *couldn't* come by road, sir. There was 'Patchies everywhere. I skirted round north o' Sombrero an' didn't seem to see anything but Injuns an' signal fires till the sentinel held me up at the haystacks."

Major Piggott leaned his arms against the window frame and buried his head upon his arms. "Go for the officer-of-the-day, sergeant," he moaned despairingly. "My God, man!" he added, for Lafferty's benefit, or his own, "it isn't twelve hours since I sent off a despatch to say we'd got Solalay and his people, and now, like as not, they've got us."

To this sentiment the trooper made no reply. He was worn, weary, and hungry. Thirst, thanks to the brimming *ollas* at the guardhouse, had already been assuaged, but there was still room for a comforting nip, and the major had ever a well-filled demijohn from which the bearer of good news went seldom unrewarded. To-night, however, the commander was in anything but benevolent mood. He nervously finished his hurried toilet, thinking far less of Fane's peril than of his own plight. If, after all, Fane and his little party should have been compelled to release their captives, would not he be blamed for having sent him forth with so small, so pitiably small, a command! And if Turner should not have succeeded in reaching the

besieged in time—and they should be annihilated—what *wouldn't* the general say! In sore perturbation Piggott came forth into the moonlight and, never noting the weary messenger, took his signal glasses and a long look at the densely wooded heights far away to the northwest, as though in search of tidings.

Surely enough. Late as it was, a signal torch was slowly swinging to and fro, giving the call "Attention! News!" and now, excitement adding to his worries, Piggott turned to Lafferty, who had seated himself at the edge of the board walk, his elbows on his knees, his face in his hands, and was now toppling over in the sleep of utter exhaustion. "Here, wake up, man!" cried the Major. "This is no time for sleeping! Run and call the signal sergeant! Tell him to bring his kit! Tell him to come like a shot!" And as Lafferty stumbled half blindly away Piggott feverishly resumed his stare at the distant agency. Just as he feared, there was a blaze among the timber far up the range. There was another far over to the southwest at the very apex of Sombrero Peak.

And then came the sergeant of the guard piloting the officer-of-the-day, and in that officer Piggott knew he need look for neither sympathy nor consolation. A soldier every inch of him was Captain Hazlett of the Infantry, a man who held his tongue and temper both in leash and did his duty, a man who knew more about the Apache and Apache land than Piggott probably could ever learn. They had rubbed each other's fur the wrong way from

the first week of their association at the post. Piggott was timid, irresolute, vacillating. Hazlett was "vigorous in speech: in action prompt and bold." Hazlett "had no use," he frankly said, for the Indian agent at the reservation. Piggott was afraid of him, because that functionary of the Bureau had what Piggott sorely desired—influence. There had been controversy between Hazlett and the agent over the latter's injustice to a sergeant on duty with the agency guard. Piggott decided in the agent's favor, and found, inside of six days that he had decided wrong. He should have set the sergeant right at once and officially, but he temporized and dodged. The sergeant had returned to his company, hurt and humiliated. The whole command sided with the sergeant, but had to "side" in silence. Piggott sought the support of his next in cavalry rank, Captain Turner, and Turner told him frankly that Hazlett had known that agent three long years before he, Piggott, ever saw him, and, knowing Hazlett's reputation and having been warned as to that of the agent, Piggott should have known better than to decide as he did. Then instead of sending for both Hazlett and his aggrieved sergeant and making manly reparation, the major sulked in his tent and swore there was no more loyalty in the cavalry.

And now it was Captain Hazlett himself who came striding up the board walk in the faint and silvery moonlight. It was Sergeant Craig, erstwhile of the agency guard, who came bounding over the *acequias* that bor-

dered the parade, followed by two active fellow soldiers, bearing their long torch wands and the paraphernalia for night signaling. Not for a year had there been a summons at such an hour. Captain and sergeant both well knew how the major had insisted that the original stories were exaggerated; had refused to believe the reports of outlying sentries and patrols to the effect that Indians by the dozen were leaving the reservation and slipping southwestward. And now it had fallen to their lot to be witness and transmitter, respectively, of important message coming in at the dead of night; one, moreover, that could only add sorely to Piggott's discomfiture.

"See what they want as quick as you can, sergeant," he cried in nervous haste, "They may have been waving an hour. Sentries can hardly see that torch with the naked eye. Certainly I can't."

"Sentry No. 3 *did* see it, sir," observed Captain Hazlett very quietly. "He had just reported it when the adjutant came for me. I doubt their having swung more than a very few minutes."

Meantime Craig and his men, bending over their kits, had been busily at work. Presently at the tip of a long, jointed staff a copper torch was firmly set, the match applied, and a bright flame burst on the night. Then up it went to the vertical in the strong grasp of a tall infantryman. "Answer at once. Never mind the rest," said the captain, while his men went on setting foot torch and flame shades, and then as the post adjutant, bringing

his own glasses, came hurrying back to join them, with powerful sweep the long torch was whirled swiftly down twice in quick succession to the bearer's left; twice again; twice a third time; then from the vertical it sank slowly to earth directly in front. "22-22-22-3" it signaled. "All right. We see you. We're ready. Go ahead with your message," it said. And, though it was all Greek to him, Piggott gazed through his binocular; the adjutant brought his glass to bear, while the sergeant steadied the long telescope against a tree box, and stationed one man, with pad and pencil, to record the message as it fell from the receiver's lips. In breathless silence all watched and waited, listening intently. A moment of silence and the sergeant began slowly to speak. "Be ready, Klein," he murmured, to the recorder. "Here it comes."

Only those who had glasses, and good ones, so great was the distance, could follow the swift, tiny, sparklike circling of the little red spot against the black background of the Mesa. Craig's lips began to twitch again. "To Commanding Officer," said he. "That's easy. Now! S-o-l-a-l-a-y (Three) e-s-c-a-p-e-d. (Three three) I-n-d-i-a-n-s (Three) s-a-y (Three) n-o-w (Three) s-a-f-e (Three) S-i-e-r-r-a (Three) B-l-a-n-c-a (Three three). F-a-n-e (Three) a-n-d (three) a-l-l (Three) d-e-c-l-a-r-e-d (Three) k-i-l-l-e-d (Three three). Sig. Waters, Agt. (Three three three)," concluded the sergeant, with professional gravity. "Up, Smith! Acknow-

ledge!" And while the signal man slowly swung the message "We understand," with misery in his trembling voice the major turned to Captain Hazlett.

"Can you believe that—possible?"

"Quite, sir," said Hazlett dryly, "if Turner obeyed the orders I hear were—given him," which was as near to insubordination as Hazlett had ever been known to go.

CHAPTER V

AS THE MAJOR TOLD IT

BUT Turner, as we know, had found means of disregarding orders, of getting around and beyond the interposing Indians, of succoring Fane, and then of herding homeward the renegades. We know, too, that Fane and some, at least, of his people, though sorely hammered, were not killed, but it was two days before the modified comfort of this assurance reached the post commander, who meantime, fortunately, sent no further despatch. "Bad news travels fast enough," said he. "And I do not feel justified in risking couriers through hostile Indian country until positive information is secured." Hazlett, to whom this was imparted, bowed solemnly and said nothing. The hostiles were almost as numerous and much more hostile when Toyàh was despatched with tidings that were based on no better authority, but Toyàh bore announcement that would vastly benefit Piggott in point of professional reputation, and Piggott could carry much more of such report in his favor without being overburdened.

There were few women at this distant, isolated post, to which the mail came but once a week, and that by buckboard from the Gila Valley. Two brave army women

had followed officer husbands in exile, Mrs. Hazlett and Mrs. Gregg—Turner's wife preferring to winter in San Francisco, at least until he could get transferred to Sandy, where there were comfortable quarters, and they were only a day's ride from Prescott, Fort Whipple, and lots of army gayety. But in gentle Mrs. Hazlett young Fane had already found a kind and helpful friend. The captain had served under General Fane in the Army of the Cumberland; had welcomed the son for the sake of the father, and had begun to like him for his own. There was no way of cross-questioning the agent's authorities as to the direful story told. Moreover, as a result of three years' study of Apache characteristics, Hazlett had learned to place more reliance on their bald statements than upon the embroidered tales of the average settler. That Solalay had been captured and had later managed to escape, Hazlett fully believed. That Fane and his party had been massacred to a man he regarded as more than probable. The sudden hegira of three hundred braves could only have been caused by some such stirring emergency as the attempt to wrest a noted chief from the hands of his captors. That many or most of them were already back again went far to prove that, one way or another, their mission was ended; that with confidence the agent could signal that Solalay had escaped and was safe in the wilds of the Sierra Blanca added to Hazlett's firm conviction of the truth of the story. As for the rest of it, the doctrine of probabilities ruled in its favor. What

chance had Fane and his little party, surrounded among the rocks of the Sierra by ten times his force in foes? It was with sad heart that Hazlett ventured home at three in the morning, praying she might be asleep, and well knowing she would not be. She was up and had coffee ready for him, and his campaign kit spread out upon the bed, and had closed the door to the childrens' room lest they should wake and hear and be terrified; and from passing members of the guard she had heard the story and so spared him the sorrow of having to tell it. She met him with fond arms and kiss at the doorway to their little army home, and drew him within and hung his sword and belt upon their accustomed hook. "I heard it from one of our men," said she. "But I shall not believe it yet. Will you be sent out—do you think?"

"No one will be sent out," he answered, drawing her within the clasp of his strong arms, "no one, that is, except the couriers to call in all that *are* out—even the hay cutters, even the big guard at the Fork. Nell, how thankful I am we have no telegraph!"

"Then you think it—true?" she questioned, her brave eyes swimming, her lips quivering despite every effort at self-control.

"I—fear so, unless Turner—ignored his orders."

Two big tears began to trickle down her sun-burned cheeks. They were heroines, these army women of "the days of the Empire"—the early days of the conversion of the Apache. Privation they could and did endure; death

they dared, but complexions they sacrificed—some of them irrevocably—to marital love and devotion. The woman of the Orient blackens her teeth to prove her loyalty to the lord of her bosom. It is left for the army wife to tan her own skin. Madame Yale was then unknown. Cold cream would speedily have become hot and spoiled, and similar preparations could never have survived a week of that fierce, furnace-like heat. The only balm that never lost its power to soothe was the kiss of love, gratitude and unchanging admiration that rewarded, if it could not quite repay, the lavish tribute of a wife's devotion. Nell Hazlett, sure of her soldier husband's heart and soul, was a happy woman even in her isolation, save when, as now, she had to think of other women's sorrows, and more than all others she was thinking now of Ronald Fane's mother and sisters, of whom he had talked to her every day and evening since his coming to the post six weeks before, and of Ronald Fane's sweetheart, of whom he had only just begun to talk within the week that saw him sent forth to his soldier duty—to, perhaps, his soldier fate.

“He left certain things in my care,” she murmured, nestling her chair close beside his own, after pouring his coffee. It lacked still three hours of dawn, but well she knew that he would not now rest, or remove his clothes, until relieved from guard. “And he asked me to take especial care of certain letters, and to write to her if he didn't come back. You know how eager he was to go

at first, and then how he came to us just before the start—after Captain Turner had been talking with him.”

“I know,” said Hazlett gravely. He had been thinking of just that same matter—of Fane’s grave and anxious face as he came from that last conference with his captain.

“Well, dear, the letters came—yesterday, three of them, all postmarked Lenox, within ten days of each other. It is going to be hard to have to write to *her*.”

“Do you suppose there is an engagement?” he asked.

“He said no, but think—three letters in nine days, and in the height of a social season, and she a belle and much sought after.”

Hazlett finished his coffee, and pushed back his chair. He was thinking deeply, painfully, and yet his arm encircled and drew her to his side. “I, too, have a letter, *two* letters in fact, only I haven’t liked to speak of them as yet. I did not see my way. I hoped Fane didn’t—care so much for—for—well, I suppose it’s the same girl.”

“Why?” and her eyes opened wide as she turned her face full upon him.

“Oh, it’s nothing against *her*!” he began in haste, for the tone of the question told the trend of her thought. “At least—well, it’s from the general, his father. Colonel’s pay, you know, doesn’t go far at Fort Adams when wife and daughters delight in the Casino and Society.”

“But I thought he, or she, or both of them, had money.”

“That’s just it. That’s just the worst of it,” answered

Hazlett gravely "If they'd never had it, and had been bred to self-denial and simple living it wouldn't be so hard. Nell, dear, Mrs. Fane has never been a Mrs. Hazlett, and now the dear old fellow is worrying his heart out over the situation. Her money, what there was of it, went five years ago. His hasn't been enough to supply the demand. Now he's a poor man, with a wife and daughters richly endowed in the extravagances of life. He has heard fabulous tales of Arizona mines—that led to his letters. Then he began to open his heart. He says there's only a little life insurance; that he can't live many years; that his boy may have to look out for the mother and some of the sisters, and he fears Ronald has fallen in love. Bad as that *was*, how infinitely worse will it be if—we've lost him entirely."

She bowed her head upon the broad shoulder, with its worn old strap of tarnished gold and pallid blue. "Fallen in love!" she cried. "Why, Ned, he almost worships that girl, I believe! What's more, I believe she cares for him. Listen! There's someone running?"

Hazlett was first at the door, his young wife close following. Somebody was running, running swiftly, up the gentle slope toward the commanding officer's, at whose window a light was dimly burning. Other lights were blinking in the low log barracks across the quadrangle and down at the loop-holed guardhouse where, in the faint moonbeams, half a dozen dark forms were huddled in a bunch. Hazlett quickly buckled on his sword belt

and, with a reassuring word, left her at the doorway. News of some kind, he argued, must have come, and he preferred to get it first hand rather than through the medium of the post commander.

Two Apaches, somewhat bedraggled but by no means betraying anxiety or fear, stood in front of the guard-house porch, surrounded by several men of the guard. To Hazlett's question, "What have we here?" after being "advanced" by the corporal of the third relief, the sergeant came forward and reported.

"Lieutenant Hunter of San Carlos, just back from his scout, sir, sent these two beggars in because what they told might be true. He picked them up on the lower Salado. Corporal Speed, who brought them in, says they want to swap news for something to eat. They had nothing but hardtack, so they sent 'em here. This one speaks Spanish, he says, and as far as I can make out he will talk if we'll feed him. The company cooks are just being called, sir, and I thought it worth trying. Corporal Linck went on the run for the trader. He talks Spanish and 'Patchie both. I told him to tell the major."

But Hazlett could not wait. He turned on the first and nearest. "*Quiere comer?*" he asked, in the vernacular of the land. The Indian simply nodded. He had been long schooled to waiting. His news was marketable, as he well understood, and would fetch its price. "Tell our cooks to heat some hash, quick, and send a lot of it here—and bread—and coffee," said the captain, to the drummer

of the guard, and the little chap started instantly and at speed. The Apache noted, though without a sign. "Gran Capitan's" word was good enough for him. Then Hazlett turned on him again, and again with the lingo of the far southwest—the *lengua Castellana* crossed with the heathen dialect of the Tonto Apache:

"*Sabe Teniente Chiquito—Fane?*"

A nod was the instant answer.

"*Muerto?*"

A shake of the shaggy black head. Then four grimy fingers were uplifted.

"What? *Cuatro?—Solamente Cuatro?*" questioned Hazlett, hopefully, eagerly. "Only four killed?"

"My God!" muttered the sergeant, forgetful of discipline in the access of relief and joy. "He says only four are killed—only four, and the lieutenant not one of them. Go fetch him a tubful, Johnny. He shall eat till he busts, if I have to go hungry."

And then the polyglot trader and the first relay of rations arrived together. The ravenous Indians fell to at the trenchers, and for a few minutes only guttural monosyllables could be extracted from either. Hazlett hastened back to his quarters, his first thought for Nell.

She was waiting at the door and almost sobbed aloud at his joyous words "I believe Fane is safe, and that but few were killed. Hunter sent in two Tontos—men whom he caught down the Salado." At sight of the major's

hurrying form Hazlett stepped one moment inside the door. Probably he would have done so anyway. Then hastened back to the group. Poole, the trader, turned promptly to him, which was uncomplimentary to the commanding officer, but he had known and respected Hazlett three long years. He had not yet learned to respect his post commander.

"These fellows tell it straight, captain," said he. "Fane was corraled in the Pass, they say, and fought like hell. Four soldiers were killed, and a lot of Indians. Solalay and his people all got away. Solalay wounded, but able to travel. He's far out of reach by this time."

And in this way came the earliest reports to the little garrison of the serious affair in which so many comrades had been engaged, and in the course of which, doubtless, others, too, had fallen, painfully wounded if not done to death. There was little sleep the remaining hours of the night, for either officer or man. Any moment might bring further signals from the agency, any hour be fraught with tidings from the field. Piggott ordered the sentries doubled, the outposts reinforced, the infantry under arms. "Knowing our depleted strength," said he, "it might occur to the Apaches that now would be a capital time to attack the post." Hazlett mustered his men without a word of reply. "Knowing," said he, to himself, "that Turner and his troopers were close at their heels, the Apaches probably were making the best time of which they were capable, getting back to the agency,"

and, once out of the valleys and into the rocks the Apache afoot could make two miles to the troopers one. Dozens, as they knew, were already back. Dozens more were coming, and just at dawn the outlying pickets heard afar off to the northwest the soft, yet stirring peal of the cavalry trumpet and the crackle of carbine and rifle. Turner's fellows had caught up with a lot of laggards, possibly conveying Indian wounded, while still in the flats of the Salado, and were teaching them the error of their ways.

Then it could not be long before there came official tidings from the seat of war. It was not. The drums and fifes played their perfunctory reveille at six o'clock to a garrison already wide awake, and the lookout at the quartermaster's stables shouted, "Couriers coming from the west!"

They proved to be Sergeant Hickey, of Turner's troop, and two men, with spent and nearly shoeless horses, with "the captain's compliments, and he was rounding up the last of the renegades and hadn't time to write." He had forty prisoners, mostly wounded Tontos and Sierra Blancas, and would return to the post by easy marches as soon as he had turned over his victims, as orders required, to the guard at the agency. Before the wearied men could stable their horses or get a mouthful to eat, the major demanded full account of the situation, and then at last the suspense was ended and the tale of the Tontos, as told by Trader Poole, was verified, and more.

Farnham, Schmidt, Welch and Sinclair were the four the Indians knew to be dead, and dismembered, though the latter fact had not hitherto been mentioned. It was left to Hickey and his fellows to tell the rest—that for forty-eight hours Fane's little force had stood off perhaps thirty times their weight in mountain Apaches; that Doyle and Murray had died of their dreadful wounds; that Hayden's leg was broken, and he was half dead; that Fuller and Higgins were very low; that Dolan, Sutton, Field and Mullins had been painfully, and almost all the others slightly, wounded, and that Lieutenant Fane himself was nearly blinded from inflammation resulting from a gash along the eyebrows, and that his left arm was shattered close to the shoulder. Dr. Evans had said "*Teniente Chiquito*" would probably never be able to spar again.

"But what's this about Solalay and other Indians escaping? How did that happen?" asked Major Piggott, whereat it is said old Hickey looked dazed for a moment before he answered. "We niver axed about that, sorr, when we saw the fix they were in. The wonder was how our fellows escaped, e'er a one of 'em, wid so much as a piece of his skin."

But this was the despatch Major Piggott sent the next day, and by way of McDowell this time, for now he had nothing to boast of. This was the despatch the clerks at post headquarters used to show, as its copy stood for weeks in the "Letters Sent" book, to comrades who could hardly believe their eyes, especially such comrades as

Dolan, Scott and Fuller when Fuller was able to be up and about again, and that little Hayden came limping over from the hospital to see, some six weeks later, and seeing said things that might have cost him six months' pay and concomitant hard labor in charge of the guard. This was the letter, report, dispatch or whatever it might be termed that, in his bitterness and chagrin, "Ould Spigots" sent on to Department Headquarters, without requesting the commanding officer of McDowell to open and read, but sealed against such intrusion, and this was the report that, in garbled form, got into the columns of the California press, and in condensed and worse form into the telegraphic news from the Pacific slope as reproduced in the journals of the Atlantic and Middle States:

FORT PLUMA BLANCA, A. T.,
November 15th, 187—.

ASSISTANT ADJUTANT GENERAL,
HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF ARIZONA,
WHIPPLE BARRACKS, PRESCOTT.

Sir: I regret to be compelled to announce that, after their brilliant capture by the cavalry from this post while acting under my instructions, Chief Solalay and the Indian renegades under charge of Lieutenant Fane, —th Cavalry, who had a strong guard, succeeded in making their escape and are still at large. Captain Turner, with eighty men, is in pursuit, and I cannot but hope that this energetic officer may succeed in recapturing such dangerous and desperate characters. Lieutenant Fane appears to have led his men into an ambuscade, in which several were killed and many, including himself, were more or

less severely wounded. I have sent surgeons, ambulance, attendants, etc., with pack mules, to Tonto Pass, and will report further when the party returns.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN S. PIGGOTT,

Major Commanding.

“My God!” said little Hayden. “*That* for the man that dared hell to save me! *That*, when old Spigots has the medal of honor!”

CHAPTER VI

A SOLDIER'S THREAT

THAT medal of honor of the major's had been a matter of mild wonderment among the exiles of those early and almost forgotten days. It was a decoration much prized and much coveted in the little fighting force of the old army. So far as then known it stood for some specific act of distinguished bravery in action. Two veteran sergeants at the post of Pluma Blanca were its proud possessors: one for a daring deed at Five Forks; the other for saving the life of a boy lieutenant under furious fire at Gettysburg. The regimental standard bearer and his guard for similar reasons had all been similarly decorated. Indeed, one of Colonel Pelham's fads was the selection of medal of honor men for that proud and conspicuous duty, but these men were at regimental headquarters, Camp Sandy. Already, too, there were three non-commissioned officers whose heroism in Indian warfare (which demands, indeed, a higher order of courage, because of its desperate nature) had led to War Department recognition and the medal. But it was a singular fact that of the three regiments at that time serving in Arizona only one commissioned officer could count the bronze cross of that most distinguished Order

among his possessions, and of all others that man was Major Piggott.

In those days the annual army register never published, as now, the list of officers and men entitled to the medal, and why. Every soldier in the —th, however, knew just how, when and where his regimental comrades had won the prize. But Piggott came to them a comparative stranger; his medal as a complete surprise. He arrived at Department Headquarters one hot summer's day. A dance was given at Whipple Barracks the following night, the cool mountain air rendering full uniform a possibility and, civilian evening dress being an official impossibility on such occasions, the officers appeared in the new frock coat and pincushion shoulder-knot of the then brand new regulations, and lo, on Piggott's broad and manly breast was pinned the tiny flag and the modest copper-colored medal that, in the eyes of all men and women there assembled, was the symbol of most distinguished valor, and one thing they had hitherto heard of the new arrival recently "consolidated" into the cavalry and assigned to the —th and Arizona, was that he had never been in action. Then how the mischief happened it that he should have that medal? Men looked at the decoration and then at each other, and said nothing. Women looked first at the medal, and then at the men for explanation. Mrs. Wilkins, the unterrified helpmate of a veteran lieutenant, a woman of whom many a man beside her husband stood utterly in awe, took the bull by the horns, as she would

express it, and shortly after supper, when the sets were forming for the then never-neglected Lancers, faced her complacent partner without a tremor and amazed him with the out and out demand, "Well, Meejor Piggott, it's the medal of honor ye're wearing! Now, *how* did ye get it?"

Piggott, perhaps, had been asked that question before, and at all events knew just how to take it. Bowing with much deference and with something like a blush upon his already ruddy face, he diplomatically replied:

"Ah, Mrs. Wilkins, in a regiment like yours it would be absurd to speak of my service. Modesty forbids."

"But sure, meejor," she persisted, "now that ye're to be wan of us, it's proud we are to see, and we want to know, all about it."

And even then he parried, as "First couple forward and back!" was shouted by the then indispensable "caller." She nailed him, however, when it came to "Swing your partners all," and with jovial laugh he answered in bluff, off-hand, soldier fashion:

"Oh, for just a little thing that happened in front of Washington, way back in '63. There was really nothing to it worth mentioning, but the President and Secretary seemed to think there was. Don't ask me to go into particulars—here."

And, on his promise to tell her later, his cross-questioner released him, but after that Lancers never once could Mrs. Wilkins lure or waylay him. In thirty-six

hours he was away by buckboard for the post assigned him far over at the foothills of the Black Mesa, and up to this moment, in mid November, neither Mrs. Wilkins nor anybody else, from the colonel down, had been able to ascertain by what act of valor Piggott had won the coveted medal. Black Bill, his junior by a file or two on the list of majors, who had many a battle scar but never an "honor," save some brevets showered promiscuously at the close of the war, swore he'd have it out of Spigots if ever he met him. Bluff old Caraway, who had led a New England brigade through the Wilderness with Grant in '64, and was now doing duty with the title of general and the pay of a major, burst into shouts of laughter when asked if he knew. "Why," said he, "you could buy those things for a shilling where Piggott hails from," and Wickham, the black-bearded adjutant general, with a fighting record and four wounds to his credit, so far departed from his general rule of never knowing anything as to say that one of the traditions of the Army of the Potomac was that a whole regiment of "emergency men" went home with the medal without ever once pulling trigger behind a ball cartridge.

But Spigots appeared with his medal at Sunday morning inspection at Fort Pluma Blanca, soon after which Sergeants Strong of the cavalry and Tremain of the infantry discontinued the practice of wearing theirs, and merely looked embarrassed when their captains asked them why. Hazlett and Turner, comparing notes as to

that significant fact, grinned and allowed that while existing orders permitted, they did not prescribe the wearing of the medal at all functions in full dress. The major was living in solitary state by the time he had been a month at the post. Wife and olive branches he had in the distant East. There was no officers' mess, proper, at the fort. Turner, with two of his subalterns, Fane and Bliss, "kept house" after a fashion. Gregg was married and Mrs. Gregg was much in evidence. The infantry bachelors boarded at the trader's and lived better than did their fellows. The major dwelt alone, looked after by a China boy who was domestically all things in one.

And, since the sending of that second dispatch and the fuller report that followed, the major found himself more than ever without sympathetic fellow men. Turner and his command got back about the 17th, by which time Dr. Evans had most of his wounded under canvas at the fort. Others, more painfully wounded, were still a few miles away, having come in by slow stages. Some were still delirious, some in dangerous condition. One, Lieutenant Fane, though suffering much and quite weak, was clear headed and on the mend.

But his wound was one over which Evans and his assistant pondered much and gravely. They were beginning to wonder if the senior had been wise in trying to save what was left of the arm. A decade earlier it would have been sliced off summarily. The humerus had been shattered and split by a jagged, spherical bullet that literally

“smashed things,” for fragments of bone had been driven through to the shirt sleeve, and others were oozing out with every day. Evans swore he could “patch the thing up,” and had proceeded to do so, but, time and again the two would come and remove the dressing and study the ugly hole, resting their elbows on their knees, and their chins in their hands as they did so, and then they would renew the bandages, and the carbolated applications, and talk cheerily with their patient, and then, gravely and murmuringly, later, to each other. Turner and Hazlett saw how anxious they were and it made the captains anxious. And all this time, for ten days after the fight, neither Turner, Hazlett nor any officer at the post except Piggott and his unhappy young adjutant knew the tenor of his reports and despatches, even though among the enlisted men talk and comment, not to say curses, were rife.

Then came a despatch from Department Headquarters. Major Piggott was ordered to proceed thither “for consultation” at once, and the Major started in the big covered Concord forthwith. Then, when he was well away, Sergeant Dolan begged the captain’s pardon, but did the captain know anything about what the major had reported, and if not, in justice to his officers and men, would the captain make inquiry? And the captain did, at once, of Captain Hazlett, now become commander of the post, and together these two overhauled the retained files, and the scene that ensued and the language made use of

by one of the two officers, the trooper of course, might have cost that vigorous campaigner very much both in cash and commission had existent regulations of the day been rigidly enforced.

Then the doctors said that no word of their discovery must be made known to Fane. It might throw him into fever that would jeopard his life.

As bad luck would have it, too, it all happened while the Gray Fox was away on an exploration of his own—a ride through the Sierras far to the south—far down by the Chihuahua line. He was looked for any day, yet might be out for a week more, and Wickham, in his absence, could only forward the contents of reports and despatches to division headquarters at San Francisco and hold the originals for the action of his chief. But Wickham could not swallow the contents of the second and third budget from Pluma Blanca. After quick conference with Pelham, summoned up from Camp Sandy, he decided to send for the senior major and let him explain fully to his colonel. Then, with Spigots away from the command, there would be chance of hearing that other side of the story which Wickham's judgment told him must exist. Three days after the major came a galloping courier, via Sandy, with a vehement letter written by Captain Turner and forwarded with respectful but suggestive remarks by Hazlett. This letter Wickham showed confidentially to Pelham, still awaiting developments at headquarters, and things were looking squally for Major

Piggott, when, lo, there came tidings of other Indian uprisings far to the north, of a massacre under the lure of the sacred flag of truce, of gallant officers and palm-bearing peace commissioners shot down in cold blood by the savages who had sought the council. Changes and promotion must follow. The campaign would be vigorously pushed. The major general commanding the division needed more officers at once. Major Piggott, —th Cavalry, would become lieutenant colonel of another, and though it might be months before he would get his commission, it need not be many days before he took his command. Major Piggott, said the next despatch, "will be relieved from duty in the Department of Arizona and ordered to report without delay at these headquarters," which meant San Francisco. And Piggott was already here at Prescott. There was really nothing for Wickham to do but bid him be gone. When at last poor Fane awakened to the full realization of the wrong that had been dealt him, the man mainly responsible was many a long mile beyond hearing the chorus of condemnation chanted in his honor.

And the way in which the awakening came was cruel in a marked degree. Fane had been sitting up and toddling about in the warm sunshine of an Arizona winter, and the sun was still hot at noontide in the valleys west of the Mesa. Something in the packages of letters, received weekly since his severe experience, had done much to bring light, hope and gladness to his eyes and a faint

bloom back to his cheeks. Everything in the greeting of his brother officers and in the regard of the enlisted men told him the story dear to every soldier heart—that he had won the solid respect of both seniors and juniors and the enthusiastic devotion and admiration of the rank and file. The wounded, especially Hayden, were doing well, and Hayden's expressions of love and gratitude were both frequent and embarrassing. Still something was amiss, as Fane could not but feel—something vague and intangible. He had noted that Turner was anxious he should sit up and write his report of the expedition before the doctors wished him to sit up at all. He recalled that Turner finally had him dictate to the company clerk, a slow and cumbrous process. He remembered Turner's dissatisfaction with the report. "You give all credit to Dolan, Scott, little Sutton and other men," said he. "You say nothing about—well, your rescue of Hayden. The men can hardly talk of anything else, and—you don't go into details as to the desperate nature of the situation there at the tanks—something to make it thoroughly clear that you *had* to turn loose your prisoners." Fane said it wasn't his province to tell of his own doings, and as for the release of the prisoners any soldier could see there was no way to hold them. And still Turner seemed dissatisfied.

Then Mrs. Hazlett, who had been "lovely" to him during his long hours of pain and fever, seemed forever wanting to talk about letters from home and from New

York. His left arm, in some rigid framework, was strapped to his side, and she had written his earliest letters to the family at his request. She had also addressed the envelopes of the letters, penciled every day and sent off once a week, to Her. But Mrs. Hazlett began to grow palpably nervous and fitful as the second week in December came, and a few days more would bring the stage with its mail bags, and to the coming of these the convalescing soldier looked forward with eager and intense impatience. By the 23d or 24th of November the details of the battle royal between his command and the overwhelming force of Apaches should have been received at San Francisco and would have been telegraphed all over the East.

By the 25th or 26th letters of congratulation would surely be penned by mother and the girls and the proud old soldier father, and by the fair, jeweled hand he loved to picture as he saw it last July, caressing the glossy mane of the horse she loved. By the 27th or 28th such letters should be speeding westward along the Mohawk. By the 4th they should have left 'Frisco for the fag end of the railway. By the 6th the buckboard should have started across the desert with them from the Colorado crossing. By the 9th or 10th they should be at Prescott, and the next hebdomadal trip of the dust-covered, canvas-topped, spring-bottomed stage should bring them with their load of glowing words—to him.

It was a cruel awakening. Mrs. Hazlett had not had

the heart to tell him the half, or indeed even a little, of what she feared. She had begged her husband and Turner to prepare him, and they had shrunk from it. There was still time, she argued. The stage was due Saturday about sunset—it never came earlier, and Friday evening or Saturday morning she would seek him and gently break to him the actual nature of the major's report.

Friday afternoon at four who should come riding into the post from the old Tonto trail—the road to McDowell, but Al Sieber—the “Scout of the Sierras”—with a Mexican packer and a brace of mules. “They asked me to fetch along the letters,” said he, to Hazlett and Turner, who were first to meet him. “Got as many as a dozen for Mr. Fane,” he added, as though he were unduly favored. “S’pose he’s getting along all right. That young fellow didn’t seem to savvy Indian business, did he?—And, d’you know, I somehow expected him to do better.”

“How could he?” asked Turner bluntly.

“How *could* he? Why, they’re saying at McDowell and Whipple he ran his nose into a regular plant, and turned loose his prisoners, Solalay and all, hopin’ that that would let him out.”

“It’s a d——d lie!” said Turner hotly. Then choked at Hazlett’s warning glance and uplifted hand. Fane, with his eyes ablaze and a red spot burning in each cheek, stood at the doorway of the little office. He had heard

every syllable, and wrath and indignation trembled on his tongue as he strove to speak.

"Let me—first," said Hazlett, as impetuously Fane came striding in. "Whoever started that story, Sieber, was utterly ignorant of the facts—if nothing worse. No, Fane," he added gently, "don't attempt to speak now. Your captain and I have set you right—will see that you are set right everywhere."

"Well—gentlemen, I'm more than sorry," cried honest Al, all confusion and contrition. "But, why, it's that way in all the papers, in the major's report, and—and it isn't so at all? Oh, I'm d——d glad of it!"

"It's a lie and a shame," said Turner hotly again. "And you deny it on my authority wherever you go. And we've sent the true report. Piggott shall swallow the lie before he's a week older."

"He can't! He's gone already," said Sieber. "Ordered to 'Frisco and beyond. There's been hell to pay in the Modoc country."

"Come with me, Fane," said Turner gently. "Come, and we'll get the letters a little later." But Fane would not budge. While Sieber went on with the details of the massacre, the adjutant was sorting out the mail. With a thick bunch of letters in his one available hand the young soldier left the office and shut himself in his room. An hour later when Turner knocked no answer came, nor was there answer to successive tapping. He turned the knob, entered and found his lieutenant lying face down—

ward on the little white-covered camp bed, the floor and coverlet littered with newspaper clippings and dozens of closely written pages in three or four different hands. One letter, clutched in the one hand left, was presently hurled across the room as Turner bent over the bed, and then with fearful flush in his face and with fury in his bloodshot eyes, the young officer staggered to his feet and thrust back the outstretched arm of Dr. Evans, who came hurrying in. Clinching his right hand over his head, Fane turned on his friend and captain:

“By the God that made me, Captain Turner, if I have to follow that blackguard to the depths of hell,” he cried, “I’ll thrash the truth out of him—or kill him!”

And this was before the fever could fairly have taken hold, that for long days after held him helpless in its grasp.

CHAPTER VII

THE MEDAL OF HONOR

WEEKS went by and many a change came over the scene and actors in this little frontier drama. The personnel at Pluma Blanca, as we found it in the fall of 187—, was widely scattered by the first of April. Spigots was now commanding a post afar in the pine forests of Washington. Hazlett most deservedly had been awarded the recruiting detail, which promised two years in civilization for him and his, and they were now visiting old Army friends at Prescott before starting for the mouth of the Colorado and the sea voyage round to the Golden Gate. Turner and his “people,”—a way he had of designating his soldiery and sorrels both,—had been transferred to regimental headquarters at Sandy, whither Lieutenant Fane had managed to make the ride, sometimes by mule litter, “fore and aft,” sometimes in saddle, to which he could no longer spring as of old. Neither could he comply with the provisions of the cavalry tactics of the day, which prescribed that he should “seize a wisp of the mane with the left hand,” the left hand and arm being still practically useless, the latter still in its framework strapped to the side. Moreover, Fane had not been mending as was to be expected of a young

fellow of sound constitution and good health and habits. Fane had had weeks of high fever, followed by others of low spirits and vitality. Captain and Mrs. Hazlett, alone, were in position to tell the real cause or causes, and they would not. There was one period of four weeks in mid-winter during which these loyal friends of the patient had taken entire charge of his letters and correspondence, and the missive Hazlett wrote to General Fane after reading the old soldier's letter to his son, and the letters Mrs. Hazlett wrote to the mother and sisters after reading both these and the newspaper clippings, threw that army household into a paroxysm of mingled rejoicing, triumph, and self-reproach. But the two letters, combined, sent the brave old division commander of the war days into the seclusion of his "den," where, on his knees, he sobbed out his thanks to the Merciful Father that the rebuke was deserved, that his boy had proved himself a man and a soldier, that it was now his turn,—the foolish, the improvident, the father of little faith,—to sue for forgiveness and to pour forth from humbled and chastened heart the sad story of his debts and entanglements. "I cannot long bear up under it, my boy," he wrote. "There is no hope now of my getting a star before retirement. It goes to your Gray Fox, and he deserves it, though it lifts him over every colonel in the army. So after all there will only be for a year or two the three-quarters' pay of a colonel, then a miserable little ten-thousand-dollar life insurance for your mother and the girls. Pet could

marry any day, and probably will marry before long. Clare could have married three times over, but we all thought our beauty should not be thrown away on the army, and looked, God help us, for a brilliant match for a girl without a dollar of dot. As for Jane,—our plain, practical, spinster Jane, she seems to have been the one level-headed member of the family. She has been studying while the others have been flirting and dancing. She will be a help to you in caring for the mother and for Clare when I am laid away. The old wounds bite sorely, as will yours in days to come, my boy, but may God spare you the mental pangs, the humiliation and distress that have bowed my old head. I'd gladly go to-day—only that would leave them with—nothing."

This letter had contributed little to Fane's recovery, though it killed the last vestige of rancor he felt that his soldier father should so readily have accepted the first published stories of the savage fight at Tonto Pass. He thought it, as did Hazlett and his wife, a deed of unnecessary, unjustifiable harshness that in his chagrin the stern old father should have gathered up every newspaper that referred to the matter, editorially or otherwise, and cut out paragraphs and bundled them all into his letters and asked his son how he expected him, brevet major general of the regular service for gallantry on a dozen fields, to face his officers and men, well knowing they were jeering over the disgrace of his only son. Heavens, but it was hard!

Yet it brought prompt reaction,—retribution even,—as we have seen. To begin with, General Fane's officers and men were far from jeering over the story. They honored and loved their brave, blunt, straightforward old colonel, though they had not begun at that time to estimate press descriptions of military affairs at their proper value. Even those who gave credence to the story felt sympathy and sorrow for the father. One officer, indeed, was there who hailed from the same State as Piggott, who knew him by reputation, who declared that there would be another side to the story, and who proved to be a true prophet, for it was not many weeks before the very papers that had teemed with talk about "the weak-kneed lieutenant who had surrendered Solalay and his murderous gang," began, of course without withdrawing anything previously said to his grievous detriment, to publish paragraphs to the effect that there had been the severest kind of a fight; that Lieutenant Fane, in spite of serious wounds, had behaved with bravery and commanded with skill and judgment. Still, first stories and first impressions are hard to eradicate. For long weeks and months and in many a city and community Fane was known as the officer who led his men into ambush and weakly surrendered the prizes of the whole campaign, rather than as the man honored and envied in the —th Cavalry and all the territory as the first officer to be recommended by the new brigadier general, their tried old leader, the Gray Fox, for the coveted medal of honor.

Nor had this result been brought about spontaneously. It was the sight of those press clippings, and a peep at certain lines in General Fane's first letter, that stirred Hazlett and Turner to the exercise of their full powers. Up to that time they had contented themselves with contradicting Piggott's report and giving department headquarters the correct version. Now, with one accord and the enthusiastic backing of such soldiers as Dolan, Scott, and, in fine, the whole department, they laid siege first on Pelham, then on the commanding general, once again established at Prescott. Fane, as soon as able to write, demanded a court of inquiry, but even before this was received by Wickham there had gone forward to "Frisco" a full description of the combat in Tonto Pass, written by Captain Turner from the accounts given by members of the detachment, with especial reference to the heroic rescue of Trooper Hayden by his wounded and suffering commander. It was supported by the affidavits and personal accounts of every soldier survivor of the affray, and when at last Fane was "littered" in to Sandy it was to be fêted, welcomed, lionized as never before had he dared to dream. The general himself drove down from Prescott, fifty miles over the roughest kind of mountain road, personally to greet and thank and encourage the young soldier, and to say to him that, just as soon as he was pronounced able to travel, he should be sent by sea to San Francisco and granted a sick leave in which to recuperate fully before rejoining the regiment.

But here, too, at Sandy the surgeons shook their heads. "That arm won't heal in months," said they; the more radical, like old Scotty Graham, holding that it should have come off at the start. Then the general went back to headquarters, and presently down came the medical director, and he, too, looked grave after a long hour's study of the still angry gap in the upper arm. "We can patch him up in April and send him along," was his report to the chief, "but I can't foretell the issue."

Perhaps had Mrs. Hazlett been asked to speak she might have told how anxieties, sorer even than that sore wound, were preying on her interesting patient, but nothing would have induced Mrs. Hazlett to tell of the thing that, more than all others, told most heavily upon his spirits and barred his recovery. There had come some unlooked-for, and apparently insurmountable, estrangement between Fane and that distant girl he so dearly loved. No letter had been exchanged since the end of January, and yet Mrs. Hazlett believed his love to be answered in full, believed that girl would even then gladly have left her luxurious surroundings in the East and would even have dared the long journey to the wilds of the wildest West to join and be joined to her soldier lover, to comfort him in his bodily suffering and in his severe and undeserved distress of mind. Yet, when Mrs. Hazlett gently strove to make him tell her the cause of the trouble, he either could or would not. "Is it not best to have it so?" he asked. "What right have I to seek a

wife when any day I may become sole support of a grown-up family?"

They succeeded, did the surgeons, as they said. They patched him up in the course of several weeks, and the general's letters and despatches in his behalf had been answered in full. They were to send him by stage to the Colorado, with a careful attendant, thence down that shallow, sand-barred, desolate stream to the sea-going craft at anchor in the gulf. Indefinite leave on surgeon's certificate would be granted after he had been overhauled professionally at division headquarters, but meanwhile and beforehand a certain ceremony was to be enacted at the main station of his famous regiment. No less than six of its troops were assembled at Camp Sandy. Four companies of infantry, too, were to be present to take part. The general and his staff would be down from Prescott. The Court of Inquiry had been set aside as unnecessary, its possible action, said the final authorities, being anticipated and rendered wholly unnecessary by the formal presentation of the Medal of Honor.

It was the greatest event and finest sight ever known at Sandy. About the tall, white flagstaff, just as the setting sun was gilding the eastward mountains, lighting with dazzling splendor the bold cliffs beyond the stream and throwing long shadows across the barren level of the parade, on three sides of a square, facing inward, the ten companies were paraded, officers at their posts, the cavalry afoot. The band of the —th was stationed in circle

at the base of the flagstaff. The great garrison colors, then a feature of the large forts or cantonments on national holidays, had been hoisted to the peak and hung almost without a ripple in the breathless air. Standing at ease, the command awaited the approach of a group of officers still hovering about the porch of the commanding officer's quarters. Women were few in number so early in the days of our dominion, but a pretty show they made,—the dozen that were there,—gathered even from Whipple Barracks and the old agency to reinforce the sisterhood of Sandy. The daintiest toilets had they donned in honor of the occasion, Mrs. Wilkins especially being as resplendent as she was conspicuous (“Both for bulk and brogue,” said Blake, who was up with his troop from McDowell), and Mrs. Hazlett, obviously excited and flustered as she had never before been known to be. Presently the group of officers moved slowly toward them, the Gray Fox in their midst. Never before had one member of the garrison seen him—seldom had they seen each other—in even that modification of the bill of dress that in Arizona passed for full uniform. In the party were Wickham, the black-bearded chief of staff, close at the general's elbow, and Blithe and Rossiter, the aides-de-camp, and Major Little, chief commissary, and his burly associate, the chief quartermaster. There were two or three regimental officers from neighboring camps, and finally, on the other flank of the general, escorting these, came “Old Catnip,” the much loved colonel of the —th,

followed by his adjutant and quartermaster, the post surgeons and the chaplain. Back of the ranks, that sprang to attention at the approach of the distinguished party, were grouped by scores the wives and children of the soldiers, mingling with the civilian employees, the scouts and packers ; back of them all even the Apache prisoners, some still burdened with ball and chain, drawn up in sullen, wondering rank, close watched by their silent, vigilant guards.

As they neared the open side of the martial square it was characteristic of the general commanding that he should seem to draw back and let Pelham take the lead, He lacked the nerve of Mrs. Wilkins, whose burly, red-faced lord, but by no means master, stood meekly in the line of file closers of his troop, the oldest lieutenant on the active list, surveying the scene between the heads of the center men of the first platoon. Mrs. Wilkins, with superb disdain of the conventionalities, stepped boldly forth from the bevy of women folk and led the way. "Sure we'll never hear the furrst wurred he says at this distance," said she. ("Nor the last that *she* says," muttered Blake to his chin strap, and the quivering delight of big Sergeant Moriarity, his nearest neighbor.) "Come on, leedies," and led the way to the square, nor paused until she reached a point within whispering distance of the official group, the sisterhood timidly following. Wickham had just handed a paper to the adjutant, Truscott, who, tall, slender and erect, by long odds the most dis-

tinguished-looking man of the party, strode a few paces forward, and then in deep, powerful baritone began to read, every word carrying to the remotest corner of the wide parade.

The document was brief and strictly official. It recited that under the authority of the Secretary of War and after due investigation by the Inspector General, the records of the Department of Arizona, based upon the report of the commanding officer at Fort Pluma Blanca, of December 3, 187—, and referring to the action in Tonto Pass November — between a detachment of twenty men of the —th Cavalry, under command of First Lieutenant Ronald Fane of that regiment, and a band of Apaches estimated at no less than three hundred and fifty, would be amended to read as follows: "The position at the tanks was stubbornly held until three men and all but four horses had been killed and several men had been wounded. To remain there invited the slow annihilation of the little command. To transfer the survivors with their wounded to a point of shelter up the northward slope demanded both skill and daring. To longer hold and care for the Apache prisoners was impossible. The movement was admirably conducted by Lieutenant Fane and with the loss of but a single trooper, whose leg was shattered. In a daring but unfortunately unsuccessful effort to bear this wounded man to shelter, Sergeant Dolan was painfully wounded and Trooper Sinclair shot dead. Later, all unaided and in face of deadly fire, Lieutenant

Fane, who had already been nearly blinded by an arrow, succeeded in reaching the exhausted soldier, and at the imminent risk of his own life bore him eighty yards to a point of refuge. The conduct of the officer commanding and of his little party, seven of whom in all were shot dead or succumbed to their wounds, and most of whom were more or less severely wounded, reflects the greatest credit upon themselves, upon the regiment and the entire army. The release of the prisoners was a military necessity.

“And now it is the privilege of the department commander to announce that, based upon the recommendation of the commanding officer, Fort Pluma Blanca, concurred in by the generals commanding the department, the division and the army, the President has been pleased to direct” (here Truscott’s voice rang out so that every word told like a shot) “that the Medal of Honor be awarded as follows: First, For daring and devotion in having, at the imminent risk of his life and in face of heavy fire from surrounding Indians, left his shelter and though painfully wounded and nearly blind, succeeded in reaching and bearing unaided to a place of safety a private soldier, helpless from a shattered leg,—First Lieutenant Ronald Fane,—th U. S. Cavalry.

“Second: For daring and devotion in having, at the imminent risk of his life and in face of heavy fire from surrounding Indians, left his shelter, succeeded in reaching and partially succoring a comrade, helpless from a

shattered leg, in which effort his one associate was shot dead and he himself nearly succumbed to loss of blood from wounds received—Sergeant Patrick Dolan, Troop L, —th Cavalry.

“Third: A medal suitably inscribed has been sent direct to the mother of Private Ralph Sinclair, Troop L, —th Cavalry, in recognition of the daring and devotion of this brave soldier, who sacrificed his own life in joint effort with Sergeant Dolan to rescue a helpless comrade, quitting the shelter of the rocks and voluntarily exposing himself to what proved to be certain death. The annals of the Department contain no nobler examples of soldier heroism than these.

“By command of Brigadier General Crook.”

Then Truscott folded the paper, and then his voice was heard again:

“The officer and non-commissioned officer thus designated will step to the front and center.”

Together they came, side by side, though brave old Dolan, taken utterly by surprise, trembling in every limb and with his lips twitching frantically, hung back and would have followed had not Fane, whose own face was well-nigh colorless with emotion, observed this and would not so have it. The whole troop,—yes, half the square heard his low-toned words, almost in command, as the two faltered a moment in front of the standard:—“No, sir. It was shoulder to shoulder that day. It’s side by side now!”

Together they advanced, the slender, almost undersized subaltern, his wreck of an arm still slung beneath his coat, his empty sleeve still looped across his body, and on his left, tall, powerful, with weather-beaten face and grizzled hair, the veteran non-commissioned officer—both men tremulous, both men silent, both staring straight ahead even when they halted and the right hands came up in simultaneous salute. The general stepped before them, Blithe at his heels, bearing the almost priceless trophies when so won and so presented. The kindly, bearded face of the famous leader twitched a bit in sympathy with those of the two soldiers he would so signally honor. His steel blue eyes were blinking. He could hardly find voice to murmur just a few simple words of congratulation as he pinned the medal upon the breast of each, shook each heartily by the hand, and then half turned to Wickham. Instantly the staff pressed forward; Truscott's gloved hand waved to the leader; the exultant, thrilling strains of the Star Spangled Banner burst upon the evening air and—those were the days before the army had taken to the beautiful and ceremonious homage that came in with a later generation—Pelham signaled joyously to his troop commanders; "Rest" was the longed for word that let loose the pent up enthusiasm of some six hundred soldier spirits, and then followed cheer upon cheer. Cheers for the General: cheers for the President: cheers for Lieutenant Fane "that we'd wade through hell for," shouted the sergeant major—cheers, frantic cheers for Sergeant

Pat Dolan "that hasn't the bate of him in all the army," and there was none to rebuke or repress them, for the officers joined in, doubly perhaps for Dolan, and meanwhile the recipients had been passed on to the greeting of man after man, of woman after woman, and there were smiles and tears and clasping hands and fervent praise and glad congratulation; and, in this wise, honored, fêted, envied even among his kind, Fane bade farewell, for a time at least, to comrades among whom there lived no man but held him in esteem, many in affection, many even in reverence, called to face a condition hitherto hardly dreamed of, and to begin a new life in a world hitherto unknown.

PART III
THE PATHS OF PEACE

CHAPTER I

IN CLASSIC SHADES

THE soft haze of Indian summer had replaced the glare, the sharp outlines, the dazzling high lights of the Western landscape. The lake lay still and flawless, framed in mellow crimson, rich, ruddy browns and gold. Oak and maple, sumach and sycamore mingled in the gorgeous bordering of the silvery flood. On leaf and vine and tendril the early frosts displayed their filmy drapery late into each opening day. The grasses bowed beneath their weight of sparkling dew. The air was athrill with life—exhilaration—vigor, and deep laden with its gift of ozone, its train of forest odors, its faint fragrance of pungent smoke wreaths. The squirrels frisked and chattered in the branches overhead. The long-eared rabbits darted zig-zag through the shrubbery. Out in the stubble fields beyond the winding, suburban wood roads Bob White was piping loud and clear, while his shy, brown-breasted mate led joyously her pretty bustling brood. Aloft, saluted by an hundred guns, brave flocks of blue-winged teal, red-heads and mallards drove southward in the slanting rays of the earliest sunshine, seeking distant, sedgy refuge for another night. Far and near, from clustering roofs and scattered homesteads, from lofty

tapering towers in low ground and cottage chimneys on the distant, haze-dimmed heights smoke clouds soared on high with never a breath of breeze to swerve them from their zenith flight. The deep-toned bell that chimed the hour of six while yet the day god dozed beneath the eastward wave now tolled forth one single, solemn note to mark the half. Church tower and city hall among the distant buildings gave answering, harsher clang. A railway whistle from far across the mist-wreathed waters shrilled its salutation to the waking town as the long, unseen train, dull-roaring round some rocky scarp, came whirling from the night to meet the glory of the new-born day, its single and bleary eye, so forceful but the hour ago, now "paling its ineffectual fires" in the face of nature's all-pervading headlight. Then, unaccustomed sound in such surroundings, over among the wooded heights above the lapping shore line, quick, spirited and martial, a bugle thrilled the tune of the army reveille, and to the peak of a lance-like staff above the sparkling foliage the Stars and Stripes, in miniature, soared, fluttering a moment. then fell again asleep and hung drowsing in the pulseless air.

Here at the brink of the silent waters, midway between the grove-covered bluff and the bowered dwellings on the edge of town, a pathway, broad and level, followed the curving strand; and suddenly, swift stepping round a rocky ledge, there came into view a single figure, a soldier, one would say, even had there been no sign of soldier dress about him. But this man wore the jaunty *kepi* of

the cavalry. A dark blue cape, or circular, muffled his form from the shoulder well down to the thigh. Below it, straight, sinewy legs in regulation yellow-striped, snug-fitting trousers strode briskly on. Under the kepi and above the cape, mustached and thin, was a face we last saw among the sands of Arizona. That was barely six months ago. This was Fane, looking surely more than six months older.

Strange things—many things—can come to pass within a sixmonth, and strange things, many things, sad things, had come to pass with Fane. As feared, indeed as self-predicted, the soldier father had been laid away in the beautiful old cemetery at the Point, without ever a chance to gather his boy to his heart, without ever having seen that priceless medal of honor. As feared and as predicted, there was even less than the little life insurance for the mother and for Clare, to whom both Jane and Pet had resolutely and fondly surrendered their little share, sturdily saying they would never need it. Jane had found a teacher's berth in a Western college, aided thereto by a trustee who in by-gone days had led a regiment in the father's division. Pet had given her hand and heart to a soldier, instead of the stock-broker favored by mamma. Clare, who had turned down, supposedly, so many a swain, was now without so much as even an officer offer. She and the sorrowing mother, with many a backward glance and rueful sigh, had looked perhaps their last upon the revelry and riches of Newport, New

London and Narragansett Pier, and had meekly gone with Ronald to a students' boarding house in that same Western college town. It was the best that he or they could do.

And even this, in large measure, they owed to plain, pragmatical Jane. The "Foundation" was not wealthy; the Faculty was large; the salaries were distributed accordingly. It was one of the co-educational institutions then in their experimental stage. It was a State institution, its Faculty being in large measure dependent upon and dominated by its Board of Trustees, who, being politicians as a rule, were in no small measure and in turn dominated by the student body. The Governor of the State chose the Trustees, the Trustees the Faculty, and the sovereign student, hailing from every section of the State, had no little voice, had indeed considerable influence, in choosing all three, a fact the President of the Board well knew and over well considered. It was to this far Western seat of learning Jeannette Fane, "Plain Jane Fane," as she persisted in styling herself, had been summoned to report the 15th of September, and had gone the 15th of August, to "shake herself down," she said, and study her surroundings. As a young girl, late in the war when the beloved soldier father lay wounded in hospital after Nashville, she had met and known and been much admired by the silent colonel of volunteers who so often limped in on his crutches to ask for his general, to salute his general's wife, and to see his general's daughter. But the colonel

thought himself far plainer than the others thought Jane. A square, straightforward business man was he, and the general's wife knew naught of Western ways and scouted Western manners. They were days when "Mrs. General" looked forward to the command of the army, and her lofty disdain had been too much for him whom even Grant declared a typical volunteer soldier and a model man. He used to write to his old general sometimes after the war, which led to Mrs. General's pronouncing him "pushing." Pushing he was in a way that told. He pushed in his profession. He pushed in politics. He pushed and prospered in property and real estate. He would gladly have asked Jeannette Fane, fifteen years his junior, to be his wife in '65, but he couldn't face the awful condescension of the mother. He married a local heiress four years later, and still he never lost his love for his aging division commander. He was prominent as a trustee of the State Co-educational College when the news reached him of that veteran's prostration. "Largely due, it is believed," said a zealous journalist "to disappointment in his only son, whose incapacity as an officer was so strongly manifested in the recent campaign." That was early in the year, and not an hour did the colonel lose in tendering sympathy and aid. It was Jane who answered at her father's behest, and then this married model man wrote presently to her. He wrote again, congratulating all when the real news came from Arizona and the honored name was on so many

a lip. He wrote still again in condolence and sympathy, when, early in May, the telegraphic columns announced the death of that gallant veteran of the Army of the Cumberland, and then a few weeks later came a black-edged missive from the girl he had not seen since March in '65. Her sorrowful little story was no surprise to him. She asked his aid in getting a place as teacher in the public schools. The answer came in the shape of a letter from the colonel trustee's wife, inviting her to make their house her home, at least until she could find something she liked better, and within it was a missive from the Secretary of the Board to the effect that an additional instructor was needed in the Department of Mathematics. The salary was necessarily small at the start, but would be gradually increased as she gained experience in the work, which would be mainly in geometry and trigonometry. Jane left the family circle sorrowing much at her decision, but Ronald, at least, realized the necessity. Already he was seeking something to do that should eke out his little stipend. The arm had knit and was out of its sling, but a mere wreck of its old self, limp and shrunken, still unhealed and requiring daily dressing, a source of frequent irritation, if not of incessant pain. They were spending the summer at a quiet, inexpensive resort on the Long Island shore, "far from the madding crowd" and the scenes so dear to mamma and Clare in the days of their now fallen empire. Once each week Ronald went by boat to the nearest army station for sur-

gical treatment. Once each month the surgeon renewed the certificate that he was unfit for active duty. Once every day the mail came, generally with no response and never with favorable, to his frequent letters soliciting temporary employment. Not until September was there light of any kind. Then it came through Jane. Even before her own duties had begun she had found something that might be a help to Ronald, and through him to all.

The college is entitled to the services of an army officer as instructor in drill and tactics, so Colonel West informs me, and it seems that by law, having accepted certain grants of land from the government, it is required to maintain instruction in military tactics and discipline, but in some way the system has fallen into disuse. The colonel says that Major Pitt, who used to be here, and his successor, Lieutenant Strang, received extra pay from the college, and, though it cannot be promised, he believes that at the winter meeting of the board they will be glad to vote six hundred dollars or so, especially if you make a success of it. He says that if you care to try it he will have application made at once. The detail is for three years. It costs much less to live here than East. We should all have to board this first year, but, after that, by pulling together, we might have a nice little cottage house here near the college where you can leave mother and Clare with me when you return to the regiment. The colonel thinks it might stimulate interest very much to have a "medal of honor man" here, and your old maid pedagogue of a sister would certainly rejoice. Think of it over night, then wire.

I have moved into my room at Mrs. Jamieson's, the relict of an extinct volcano in the faculty. When a professor dies here the widow takes heart again—and boarders. They say

it renews their youth, and Mrs. Jamieson is certainly vivacious. She has two communicating rooms near mine that could do for mother and Clare, and I find that you could be snugly quartered next door at Mrs. Bronson's, also a widow, but not quite so youthful in her way as my chatelaine. Only, we have to speak quickly, for in two weeks "school begins," as they express it, and everything in this community I find hinges on two essentials—"school and the legislature." The latter sits six or eight weeks each winter, and supports that part of the town the rest of the year. "School keeps" from mid-September to mid-June, and the chief end of woman is to take table boarders. There is no Hall or Commons or Mess for the male students. They sleep and eat where they please. There is a big building wherein the feminine under-graduates, known as "Co-Eds," both board and lodge, but none others need apply. It has its restrictions as well as its limitations, I find, and many of the young women "dwell promiscuous" about town rather than submit to rules as to hours and the men. From what I hear, dropped without reserve from the lips of the lady matrons, managers, housekeepers, etc., I look forward to new and possibly novel experiences.

Colonel and Mrs. West have been most kind, and she was so good as to urge my remaining longer as their guest, but you know what a stickler I am for independence. I needed to be where I could study, sleep and exercise according to my own programme.

The catalogue I send will give you an idea what a big institution this is. I was surprised. As yet I have met but few of the faculty, or their families. They spend the summer camping or traveling, and are only just straggling back. There are, however, something like thirty young men and women, mainly graduates of the college, who are employed as assistants in various branches; Elocution, with reason, I should say, calling

for rather more exponents than even mathematics. Clare might air her French, she being one of Madame Chegaray's shining lights, and they tell me they thought I must have come in that department, it seems, because the trustees are expected to give employment, wherever possible to alumni or alumnae of "the school." French, hitherto, has not been a strong point. Now they have a professor from the East who lived long abroad and he insisted on two assistants of his own selection, also long schooled abroad. College people say vaguely they don't see how I, not being an *alumna*, got one of the three vacancies in mathematics, in "Math," as you call it. Well, neither do I. But, Ronald, I mean to show them why, having it, I should keep it.

Mrs. Jamieson has just called me to the window to see the "new young lady in French," a most presentable and accurately groomed young woman, if I may judge from her back. She has taken her room at the Hall, I'm told, and she, too, it would appear, has known much better days,—has met with reverses, etc. How much one learns in the classic shades of a country college. Mrs. Jamieson was even telling me more, something about the father of the lady in French being under indictment for something shady in Wall Street, but I begged off to finish this letter. And it should have been finished before the gossip began. Love to mother and the Lady Clare.

Yours plainly,

JANE.

It was Jane's letter that settled it. Ronald did not sleep over it. He hardly slept at all. The wire went that night. The application went next day. The order was issued at Washington within the week and, early in September and for the first time in her life, Mrs. Fane

found herself west of the Wabash. She was pleased to be gracious to Colonel West, who met them at the station and drove them to his commodious home. She appalled poor little Mrs. West, who shrank visibly in her presence and who looked upon Clare's fine proportions and classic features with undisguised concern. In presence of such charms it was a relief to her again to welcome plain Jane, of whom she had begun to feel vaguely jealous, never knowing or dreaming why. Of the lieutenant she took hardly any notice. Jane, her brother and the colonel vanished soon after tea to go look at lodgings. Mrs. Fane, fatigued by the long, dusty railway journey, was early abed, Clare speedily followed suit, and Mrs. West had the field to herself and a comforting cry before the searchers returned. Mrs. West, it was soon seen, was by no means strong. Mrs. West, it was soon said, must go abroad if she hoped to be restored to health.

It was just one week before the beginning of the fall term that Brevet Captain Ronald Fane arrived. This, by the way, was before the Senate discovered that Indian fighting, the deadliest and most desperate of all, was not war within the meaning of the statutes, so the Gray Fox's recommendation went through. Two years later that august body recanted, and the fighting force of the Army was edified by the decision that a man might be (as some men were) brevetted up to the stars for shipping pork and hardtack to combatants in Dixie, but could not get so much as a single bar for fighting desperately his weight

in savage Indians—and ten times over at that. Ronald Fane, however, had been duly brevetted “For conspicuous bravery in action against hostile Indians,” and the regiment and the West, at least, applauded. Only a few days they remained under the hospitable roof of Colonel West. The mother and sisters were established in their new quarters, the most primitive and contracted the ladies had ever known, even in the army. Trunks had come. Boxes and bales were coming, and, with his father’s old friend and fellow soldier for guide, Ronald had carried out his orders to report to the President of the State College, Groveton, for duty. It was a visit he never forgot.

They were ushered into a large, semi-darkened room and into the presence of a tall, spare, gray-headed and sparse-bearded man, with deep-set, cavernous eyes, hollow cheeks, long, angular limbs and bony hands, in long, loose-fitting black coat and trousers, who resignedly lowered his pen at their approach and greeted them without a smile.

He did not rise from his chair, even though one of his visitors was an active and influential Trustee. He opened the ball without a moment for the customary conventional trifles:

“You’ve come to see about the drill, I suppose,” said he.

Fane bowed and glanced toward the colonel.

“About the professorship, Mr. President,” said the colonel suggestively.

"I don't know what it's called," said the head of the college, with neither interest nor welcome in voice or manner. "There are just two things I wish—that you should get along without friction and that you should get the students into the militia."

Fane looked puzzled. This was something new. He turned to his quiet-mannered mentor for explanation.

"Our militiamen are paid five dollars apiece toward their uniform fund," said the colonel, with a smile. "But there are reciprocal obligations and duties, Mr. President, that possibly you have not considered."

"I don't know anything about that," quickly responded the head of the college. "What I do know is that many of our students find it a hardship to buy a uniform. This will help them. Then there has been more or less friction at times between the drill instructor, the students and others, and it is a thing to be avoided. Has Mr.—Mr.——"

"Captain Fane," said the Trustee smoothly.

"Has Mr. Fane ever taught—elsewhere?" asked the President.

"At West Point," said the lieutenant, not too confidently.

"At——?" The President possibly had not heard. He looked as though his thoughts were buried in the manuscript on his desk.

"At West Point," repeated Fane respectfully.

The President looked a trifle dazed or disappointed.

"I thought possibly you might be able to help in—mathematics. We may need more——" he began, but his eyes dropped again to the penciled page before him. A word needed modification. He crossed it out and began tapping impatiently at the edge of the paper. Obviously the interview was too long.

"I could try, sir," said Fane, "though I'm rusty just now."

"Well, I may have to call upon you. I'm glad you're willing. The man we had—I don't remember his name——"

"Mr. Strang, possibly," suggested the Trustee.

"Said he wasn't sent here for any such purpose," continued the President. "I'm glad you're willing to be useful."

"I hope to be that," said Fane, smiling, "even if I do not teach mathematics."

"Well—I don't know anything about the drills. That,"—and the President threw forth his hands and arms in side-long gesture as much as to say,— "that is entirely beyond me or my comprehension." Then plainly intimated that there was no need for further trespass on his time.

"Our President," said the colonel, as they walked away, "is a strange combination. His influence for good with the student body and his powers as a thinker and educator are remarkable; but he is somewhat—inaccessible at times, when deep in psychological research, and

he is tenacious of his theories, which are often Utopian, I fear. You have simply to go ahead with your work, take things as they come; remember that our boys are rough, perhaps, but I have found them mighty ready when it came to fighting. There's no better soldier stuff in the world, captain, than you'll find right here—*only* it isn't in every man to know how to develop in peace time that which in time of action almost develops itself. If I may advise I should say start in quietly, win their good will and handle them yourself. Pitt's mistake was in thinking he was sent to make a military academy of a country college.

"Strang's was in forever bothering the President about matters of discipline. Prex knows the Bible, 'the humanities,' theology, psychology and metaphysics by heart, but he has no more idea of what is military than I have of the millennium. If Prex had his way all nations should disarm forthwith, turn their spears into shares and swords into pruning hooks. He hates the sound of a gun or the sight of a soldier. He can't see why all men can't be like himself, ascetic, abstinent and peace-loving—so long as undisturbed. He can't be made to see that he is one of the most combative natures conceivable. Tread on his toes or his theories and Prex is up in arms, a fighter to the bitter end. *That* he calls 'spontaneous combativeness.' He says there is so much in human nature that every appliance to aid or develop it should be eliminated, hence no arms, no drill, no soldiers."

"And yet," said Fane, "he is head of an institution that has accepted large bounty from the Government on condition of maintaining instruction in both tactics and discipline! How is that?"

"It is hard to explain," said West. "As I say, his is a complex organism. Education is a part of his religion. To teach and spread abroad the gospel, to disseminate his theories, he regards as sacred duty. Every dollar that we can command should be devoted to the cause, and every energy not needed in teaching should be devoted to getting the dollars. One-fifth of our income is derived through that agricultural college act, and Prex thinks every cent of it should go to the support of any department in the college other than the military. He thinks the Government wrong in providing for military instruction, therefore it's right for him to divert its bounty to other purposes. Yet if some of our big brewers or speculators or gamblers were to offer to endow a chair or two or build a library or establish scholarships he'd quit before he'd take a cent from them."

They were nearly "home." The colonel lived in his handsome house in town. The subaltern boarded in a frame cottage by the lake. They had come to the parting of the ways. The big buildings of the college loomed behind them on the hill. The dense foliage hid the roofs and spires of the inland city. It was well named. Fane raised his hat and stood to let the senior pass him by. "I think I'll walk round with you," said West. Then

something like a blush surged up to his forehead. "It's—cooler along the shore."

The shaded path was beautiful. Several people were sauntering along in peaceful enjoyment of the evening air. They passed one or two men who formally touched the hat, or nodded, to the Trustee. "Some of our instructors," said he. "You'll get to know them after a while. Here's one coming I want you to meet," and Fane and Professor Lorimer shook hands and were mutually delighted. "Er—I hope you won't be severe with our boys, captain," said the professor at parting, and they went their ways. A benevolent-looking, middle-aged man was leaning on a gate embowered in roses. "This is Captain Fane, professor," said the Trustee. "I hope you'll be friends." The professor was kindly and civil, begged them to enter and be seated, but they had to go on. "I hope—er—you won't be severe with our boys, captain," said the professor, as they parted. And this sentiment before they reached home was the third time expressed, and Fane turned to his mentor. "Why *should* I be—or why should they think it?" he asked.

The colonel reflected a moment before committing himself. "It is probably because you're a West Pointer," said he. "Pitt was of our own volunteers. Strang was from Bowdoin and Norwich. I believe you are the first West Pointer seen in these parts since the war."

A curious train of thought was started only to suffer sudden interruption. As they came to a leafy corner and

turned along the shore a carriage drove by in which were two middle-aged women, facing front, to whom the Trustee raised his hat. "Ladies from the Hall," said he. "One is assistant in English Literature." But Fane's wits were wandering. He had stopped short and was staring after them. Two young women were seated facing the elders. One was now smilingly giving ear to her opposite neighbor. The face of the other was hidden. She had bent forward in the carriage and was still bending as it turned the corner.

"Someone you know?" hazarded the colonel.

"Someone—I thought——" faltered the young officer: then shook himself together. "But it's impossible!"

West spoke again: "Our matron is evidently showing the sights to our recent acquisitions. One of the younger ladies was the new assistant in French—Miss Hoyt."

And in this way and in this utterly out-of-the-way spot the girl he loved had come back into the life of Ronald Fane, and what promised to be a strange, perhaps a thankless, task all on a sudden was endowed with thrilling interest. It was a mercy that Jane stood there at the next gate, for in her smiling welcome Colonel West lost sight of the brother's startled, wonder-stricken face.

But happiness had not come with the discovery. For months no line or word had passed between them, and he had sought no explanation. It was enough that she should have ceased to write. It was the easiest way to accept the inevitable. If she had not dropped the correspondence

and him, he, in his changed fortunes and new filial and family duties, would have been compelled to explain to her. It was a mercy, though a bitter one, that it came as and when it did. He had accepted it as beyond repair. He positively had nothing to offer. She, presumably, had everything to make life beautiful. He had never so much as sought to learn where or how she was. It were all best forgotten—that brief, sweet dream—and forever.

But now she was here—here at Groveton, a teacher, a dependent! What *could* it mean but that some dire misfortune had befallen her? Now he could not, he should not, lose a moment. That very evening he called at Clifton Hall, sent his card to the matron and to Miss Hoyt. The former received him wonderingly. The latter received him not at all. Instead she sent this note:

I knew you would come as soon as you found that I was here, therefore I should have had this ready, but I could not write it. It was like you to come, but, my friend, *be* my friend and help me to bear myself bravely in these new duties. You heard, of course, of our—disgrace; there is no other word for it. And it is strange indeed, now that I have my own way to make in the world, that you should have been ordered here. It is more than probable we may meet—*must* meet; but when we do meet let it be only as mere acquaintances who have met only casually before.

Sincerely,

ETHEL HOYT.

And they did meet, once when Fane was making a formal call at the Governor's, once after "Rhetoricals,"

and that was all. They exchanged a few conventionalities on each occasion, he being confused, constrained and awkward. She being entirely self-controlled. They saw each other at intervals and at a distance about the grounds. He saw her and sat where he could see her every Sunday in church, but never yet in the six weeks of their service within these "classic shades" of State College had they met alone. Each had had much to encounter, much to bear. Each would gladly have abandoned the new and strange associations and returned to the old, but he was hampered by financial bonds and filial duties. She could only return by accepting conditions that were impossible.

With many an obstacle to keep them asunder, there was yet one overpowering force to link their lives. In his moments of gravest discouragement Fane found it impossible to think of throwing up the detail and going elsewhere, so long as she was here. If only, he thought and prayed, if only he could meet her and talk with her, win her confidence—he knew he had her faith and friendship—even such unappreciated toil as his might yet, through her sympathy, be blessed and glorified. Day and night he thought of her, dreamed of her, lived for her, bearing the poor mother's querulous complaints, the sister's scorn of her surroundings, the sense of utter incongruity in his strange lot, the slings and arrows of odd, if not outrageous, fortune—bearing *all* that he might sometimes see her lovely face, breathe the air she breathed,

and live in hope of speaking again with her uninterrupted and alone.

And at last, marvel of the marvelous, the time had come. At the base of this little cedar-crested cliff and at this sweet hour of early sunshine, before the busy day was fairly begun, at the brink of this beautiful, placid, mist-breathing mirror, one dainty foot perched on a little boulder at the edge of the lapping waters, her hat hanging by its strings from her wrist, her eyes fixed upon the distant shore, there stood the girl of his dreamland, and at sound of his swift coming she turned, startled, and, through swimming tears there was not time to brush away, looked straight into the eager lighting face of the man she knew to be her lover. It was too late to deny him. It was too unlike her to think of flight.

"They told me you were in Chicago," she said, very simply, as she withdrew her hand, also the swimming eyes, for both his clasp and gaze were ardent.

"I was," he answered, "until last night. I went with Colonel West that far and in hopes of meeting a brace of our trustees, but they had gone, and he, to my sorrow, is going."

"Is she so ill?"

The eyes were drying now, but it was still unsafe to look at him.

"The doctor says she must have a long sea voyage. They sail next week. I feel as though my only friend and advocate were leaving me."

"Not that, Mr. Fane—Captain Fane!" she corrected herself, with a shadow of a smile. "I hear from many people who are in position to know, of the great work you are doing with the students and the interest you have inspired——"

"Among many, yes," he answered; "but what makes it galling is that so many others are allowed to evade duty and then to triumph over those who have to attend. It breeds discontent and trouble. But—that is not what I should be talking with you about. There are a thousand things I wish to ask, to know, for, believe me, I know nothing." And in his eagerness Fane had stepped close to her side, his voice, his lips trembling a bit as he did so. She noted both and drew back a pace, whereat he followed.

"Don't ask; don't—know," she answered. "I never speak of it to anybody. Moreover, I should not see you here, or anywhere, in fact." Then bravely she looked up and at him. She spoke abruptly: "You know me well enough to know that had I dreamed of your coming here I would not have come. I know you, I believe, well enough to say that I am going now and you are not to follow. That is the way to Cedar Point, is it not? Thank you—yes; good-morning, captain!" And leaving him half stupefied, she turned away.

Not ten steps had she taken when with prodigious splash something heavy and massive, hurled from overhead, plunged into the rippling surface close at hand,

showering him and sprinkling her with spray. A scramble of footfalls, a snickering laugh, a sound of snapping twigs and slashing branches came from the ledge above them. Quick as the leap of a panther Fane darted into a little pathway that led to the back of the rocks. Three or four supple forms went bounding away through the underbrush. One young fellow, less lucky, stumbled, sprawled at length, and before he could spring again to his feet Fane's grasp was on his coat collar, and, with fury in his eyes, the young officer whirled him about in the effort to see his face.

"Let me go —— you! You've no right to maul me!" savagely, desperately cried the prisoner, and a furious lunge supplemented the words. Fane's answer was to thrust his fingers within the shirt collar, too, and further to the front. Now the captive *had* to look up, and a livid, scared, sweating face it was, and one that Fane knew at a glance.

Slowly, gradually the young officer loosened his grasp upon the culprit, his eyes still burning into the fellow's hang-dog face. It was a moment before he could command himself to speak:

"But for the fact that I have reason to know you and your name," said he, "I should march you to the President as you are. You are Stetson, mechanical engineering student—the man that submitted that lying physician's certificate. Now, go!"

The scowl blackened on the swollen, quivering face and

the instinct of the blackguard hissed in every word. The answer came with a curse:

“You can’t prove the half on me, by God, that I can prove on you—and I’ll do it.”

Perhaps it was God’s mercy that Fane had but a single arm available.

CHAPTER II

A CAT IN A STRANGE GARRET

IT was indeed a strange world in which our soldier found himself. Six weeks now had he been engaged in his novel duties, and of the six members of the Faculty, old or young, whose acquaintance he had formed in that space of time, four had, with more or less impressiveness, thought it a duty to express the hope that he wouldn't "be severe with the boys." "What manner of man do they think me?" was the natural query. He had met his new charges, the students of the two lower classes, in a big wooden barn of a building called the "gym." He had been notified by the President that each class would drill two hours each week, that the Sophomore company was already officered, and that he could submit as soon as he pleased the names of the Freshmen to be similarly appointed. Fane looked puzzled. "Appoint undrilled, uninstructed men as officers, Mr. President? Is that the proposition?"

"I don't know anything about that," was the quick reply. "What I wish to avoid is friction. There is always some feeling between the two classes, and I wish them kept as far apart as possible; therefore, the Freshmen should have their own officers," and having so said

the President resumed his pen and manuscript to indicate that the interview was at an end. It was a strange idea, but Fane had learned subordination, and he went forth to see how the scheme would work.

On the designated day, the first week of the term, about eighty young men appeared as participants and about one hundred and eighty as spectators. Recitations were going on in the various buildings, and Fane wondered how so many could be at the moment unemployed. A civil inquiry led to the reply, "Oh, we've nothing to do. We're specials." A Sophomore in shoulder-straps supplemented this with the statement that only "regular" students were compelled to drill. Fane looked about him a moment. At one end of the gymnasium were grouped some forty jovial young fellows armed with rifles, many of them arrayed in blue flannel coats and caps of curious and antique patterns. Along the back wall were scattered a like number of silent lads in all manner of civilian garb. All over the gymnasium, perched on window sills, ladders, and bars, squatted on up-ended Indian clubs or dumb bells, or standing in groups about the floor, were the would-be critics and spectators, latent merriment and mischief in nearly every face; in the midst of the array stood the cavalry lieutenant, in accurate, trim-fitting uniform, a light sabre at his side. Between the soldier crowd and the spectators some little good-natured chaff was volleying, but not a symptom of surliness. With pleasing and patronizing interest the

self-styled "exempts" had come to observe and remark upon the initial effort of their less fortunate fellows in what they termed the awkward squads, and the squads, both Sophomore and Freshmen, were prepared grudgingly and of necessity, but with such show of "don't care" as they could command, to submit. It was the way of the School.

And then, for the first time, Fane's voice was uplifted in the "gym," where for long months thereafter he ruled supreme. Long accustomed to instructing in the open air, he spoke without effort and, purposely, in quiet tone. There was even suspicion of humorous enjoyment twitching at the corners of his mouth.

"It is our first lesson," said he, "and I had not expected so big an attendance. But we'll do our best in the limited space. All those designated for drill will assemble at once at the north side. All others are cordially invited to come in and see us after we get shaken down to business, and meanwhile, kindly, to—retire."

The shout of laughter, the burst of delighted applause that instantly followed, told that at the critical moment the stranger had made a "ten strike." Down from the sills, ladders, bars and stoves swarmed the commentators, and, followed by the shouts and sallies of the lately down-cast, out they went into the September sunshine. Then, only interrupted by chuckles of merriment repeatedly breaking forth, the work begun. Fane set the class leader to work at taking down the names, ages, addresses,

etc., of his forty-odd Freshmen, and told the Sophomore captain to show what his men could do in the manual of arms. There was some unsteadiness and "gazing about," and very little erect carriage of head or body, but the manual wasn't bad. Fane pointed out a few defects: picked out the non-commissioned officers and half a dozen likely looking privates to act as drill masters, and then told off the Freshmen into little squads for their initial lesson in the school of the soldier. Just as he expected, not more than two of them had ever handled a musket before. Not one, then, was fit to be an officer. At the end of a busy hour, laughing, chatting and in high good humor the battalion went its way to other duties, and at two score students' boarding-house tables that day the tale was being told with merry chaff and keen appreciation how "Cap" had sent the idlers about their business, and how comical had been the first drill.

But "Cap" himself went home thoughtful. The law contemplated that all able-bodied students should be instructed in the rudiments of military tactics and discipline, otherwise the government couldn't begin to get the worth of its money. According to the rolls there were as many as four hundred young men at the college. Of these nearly three hundred had not yet been two years in attendance; nearly one hundred and fifty had not been two months. College regulations read that members of the Sophomore and Freshmen classes were required to

provide themselves with the inexpensive uniform of the battalion, and to attend drills. According to the list there were more one- and two-year students evading than attending drill. It took him a few days to get all the names and data. Meantime the gym proving too small for so many squads, they were marched forth upon the campus and thither flocked large numbers of the under-graduates, mercilessly chaffing the squads and coaching the "corporals." Fane could rule in the gymnasium during drill hours—that was his province—but the campus was free for all. A Sophomore officer, deeply imbued with martial spirit and intent on his work, took note by name of the would-be wits, and at the end of the week Fane waited on the President with a list of some eighty young men, none of whom attended and many of whom impeded the drills. The President looked up in obvious impatience. It was in office hours, to be sure, but he could ill brook interruption when engrossed in the preparation of lecture or chapter on his favorite theme, or sermon for somebody's church, or speech for some ward meeting. He was ever a propagandist of his views. The President hated to have to come down to the vulgar details of school matters. He broke in impatiently before Fane had said a dozen words.

"I don't know anything about that," he said. "You'll have to see the class officers." Then it transpired that a dozen or more members of the Faculty were told off to supervise the college work, each in charge of a dozen or

more students, and in the course of another forty-eight hours Fane had succeeded, through these officials, in opening communication with most of the recalcitrants. These latter were surprised to be called on to step forward and explain. Some said that they "hadn't been told"; some said that their "folks didn't want them to drill"; some that they were opposed to all military despotism; some that as specials they didn't have to; but most of them claimed exemption because of physical disability. Judging from the excuses grudgingly made but firmly insisted on, one-third of the under-graduates in the first and second year at the State College were bodily wrecks.

The round-up had created no little excitement, and was a source of delight and rejoicing to the regular members of the battalion, tired of being twitted with having to drill. It was human nature. Compelled themselves to take the ordeal, they had no sympathy with those who shirked, and less with those excused. For the first time in his incumbency the President found himself hampered with a military instructor who not only sought to bring the students to book, but showed symptoms of stirring up the Faculty. And what astonished the President was that those students already enrolled were enthusiastically with him. But now came trouble.

Fane's dragnet had resulted in the "conscription," as they termed it, of some forty young fellows entirely willing to accept the free education given, in large measure through the bounty of the Government, but correspond-

ingly set against rendering any service whatever in return. Some few owned up squarely and fairly and took their medicine in a manly way. Some few sullenly reported, and sullenly endured the drill. Some few "kicked" stubbornly, and two or three showed fight. One of these last-mentioned was a hulking lad of twenty or twenty-one, beginning his second term at the college, the son of a local politician of some repute, and the putative leader of a gang of young miscreants that made night hideous about certain near-by saloons, and the first time Fane looked into the eyes of this local celebrity he felt instinctively that there was work cut out for him. The President ruled that all who could procure a physician's certificate of disability should be excused. The champion base runner of the college baseball club tendered a note from his family physician to the effect that the violent exercise of military drill would weaken his heart. Fane replied that in ten months of military drill the young man would not encounter as much violent exercise as he did in ten minutes of baseball—in ten seconds in fact. The President ruled that if wrong was done and the Government defrauded, the physician was accountable, not the Faculty, and the excuse stood, to the derisive merriment of the battalion and the secret shame of the baseball men. Two of the most promising pupils in Professor Hitman's boxing class came armed with the certificates of home doctors to the effect that they had been feeble from infancy, and the weight of the

musket would be apt to injure the spine. The President ruled that he could not accept the responsibility of flying in the face of the professional opinions of recognized practitioners, and the grinning athletes stood relieved from the soldier duty to which Fane had drafted them. The President's decision created immediate and lively stir. Under-graduate ingenuity received remarkable stimulus. Sophomore Van Dyne filed a certificate that he was of feeble constitution, though he looked the picture of health and strength. Fane wrote to the doctor in the case, and the letter came back undelivered. Fane wrote the postmaster for explanation, and the postmaster said no doctor of that name ever lived or practiced there. Fane laid the matter before the President, with the result that Mr. Van Dyne was promoted into the junior class, passing a very creditable examination in classics, etc. Fane told the President the man had submitted a forged or bogus certificate, and deserved to be punished accordingly. The President said that he didn't know anything about that; what he did know was that Van Dyne was no longer subject to the rules of the military instructor. Of the twenty certificates submitted probably one-third could not have borne investigation, but the President ruled that they were final. But the most flagrant case was that first referred to. The strong, sturdy young fellow had been caught in the dragnet, and after scowlingly submitting to one drill and dodging the next, found himself face to face with

orders to make up what he had lost. It was done in studies, said Fane, therefore should it be done in drills. He then came with a certificate setting forth that he had been subject to fits since early boyhood, and the excitement of drill would probably bring them on again. Fane found the doctor, a young beginner, and comparative stranger, and the doctor said he based the certificate entirely on the young man's personal statements. Neither personally nor professionally had he ever known him before. A Sophomore officer who had lived next door to the sufferer some fifteen years and had seen him nearly every day said he had never even heard of his having a fit. Fane refused to excuse the applicant, who thereupon absented himself, and when summoned before the President said his father had forbidden his going to drill, and was coming to see the President about it. Pending the call of this parent, a "dealer in spirits" and "ward boss" with whom the President was widely at odds, the young man held aloof from the gymnasium, and this was the situation when early on this beautiful Indian summer morning he stumbled again into the clutches of Fane, with the result described.

It was his second year at the college, as has been said, and he had not a friend in the Faculty. All who knew him at all had but one opinion to express. He had been idle, surly, a truant and a ne'er-do-well. He had been before the President a dozen times, and always for rebuke or reprimand. He now appeared as a complain-

ant. He had been assaulted, he said, and abused by the military instructor, and the President, bethinking him of the stories of two or three others who declared their religious sentiments had been made to suffer because of the harsh language at drill, conceived it time to enjoin the instructor. It was not yet office hour when Fane received a summons to attend the President, and found him, as usual, at his desk immersed in manuscript, notwithstanding a lively racket in the corridor without. A lot of Sophomores, awaiting the bell for "second period," had congregated on the stairway and were skylarking with such Freshmen as happened along. The President opened the matter with customary directness:

"A student complains—er—Mr.—Mr. Fane, that you violently assaulted him this morning, and certain others have stated that the abusive language they had to hear at drill was the main cause of their aversion to it. Now, I maintain that no man is fit to command others who cannot command himself. Oblige me by stepping to that door and asking those young men to stop that disturbance. Ah, never mind, I hear Professor Nash." (Indeed for a moment Professor Nash could be heard, piping feeble remonstrance. Then the fun began again. So did the President.) "Ah, what I wish to impress upon you is that under no circumstances is an instructor warranted in laying hands on a student. We do not countenance such meas——" But here the row with-

out became uproarious, and Fane could not distinctly hear.

"Your pardon, sir," he said, stepping nearer. "If Mr. Stetson is the complaining student, I have——"

But the President uplifted both voice and hand.

"One moment. Let me finish, then I'll hear——"

But it was impossible to hear. The stairway was evidently blockaded—a "rush," unpremeditated but none the less enthusiastic, had been suddenly precipitated. "Soph" and "Fresh" were clinched in rejoiceful, delirious battle for supremacy. Weight, inertia and numbers were telling in favor of the Freshies, steadily shoving down the stairs, but, with bull-like roarings the Sophs struggled, and stood firm. To Fane's intense delight, up sprang the head of the college. Four strides took him to the door, which he flung wide open, and in another second he had two of the battlers by the scruff of the neck and with all the strength of his long, lean, sinewy arms was banging their heads together, and one head was that of the recent complainant—Mr. Stetson.

Two minutes before Fane was beginning to bristle with indignation. Now he was bubbling over with merriment. The combatants went scurrying away. The noise without had suddenly ceased. The President, flushed and victorious, returned to his seat and the pursuit of the theme. Fane had never before warmed to him—had never seen him warm. "Prex" was human, after all, Trembling a bit as the result of his violent

and unaccustomed exertion, and pausing, perhaps for breath, the President sat turning over the letters and papers on his much littered desk. Fane, much more at ease, though still at attention, now stood patiently waiting. The President presently looked up and discovered him.

"A—er—what was it we were discussing?" he asked.

"The impropriety of laying hands on a student, sir," answered Fane, with much gravity.

"A—er—yes," and then, for the first time in the six weeks Fane had known him, something like a smile, a frosty fringe of a smile, appeared at the outer edge of the thin, ascetic lips. "There may be occasions—rare occasions—when——" and the President faltered.

"When the *suaviter in modo* gives place to the *fortiter in re?*" suggested Fane respectfully, yet with certain enjoyment of the situation.

The President looked up in evident surprise. This soldier seemed to know something of Latin. If so, he might have known something of school or even college life.

The possibility had not previously occurred to him, but only because he had given it no thought whatever. He looked as though about to say "I did not quite understand you," but, instead, said for a moment nothing.

Fane took up the thread of talk. "I certainly seized that young scapegrace by the collar this morning, I possibly shook him, and I am glad to see that you followed

suit. He deserves much more than either of us gave him."

"That is not for us to determine. We both lost our temper. I shall probably send for him and apologize and——" But again the President faltered.

"I shall certainly *not*," promptly spoke the soldier. "On the contrary, I have serious charges to add to those already laid against that young man, and was coming to you at office hour. He appears to have had earlier audience."

"I met him—er—accidentally," said the President, flushing a bit. "There was a party of them, over-stimulated, possibly, running through the grove from the lake early this morning. They were noisy and profane."

"I hope you recognized the others, sir."

"They were not students,—those whom I caught sight of, at least, but after them, limping and much disarranged, came this young man. It was then he told me that one of your requirements was that he should salute you whenever you met, and—let me say, Mr.—Mr. Fane, that I think you err in attempting to inculcate that which you cannot enforce. This is not a military institution, and military methods should not be resorted to, especially if violence is to follow. I hope you in future will bear this in mind."

And now the President was himself again and desirous of closing the incident—and his ears.

But Fane's blood was up and his temper was rising.

He would not go. "Mr. President," said he, firmly and decidedly, "before ever I went to West Point I attended a while a college one hundred years older" (he was tempted to say "and ten times better") "than this, and the first lesson we received from the lips of the President was, now that we were duly matriculated, it was a courtesy and a duty we owed to the members of the Faculty, when we met them on or off the grounds, to raise the cap and tender respectful salutation. Here I find that neither on nor off the grounds has it been a custom. Students sometimes touch their hats to you and to those to whom they recite, but as a rule Freshmen and Sophomores, too, pass their superiors with no sign of recognition. Indeed, I am told by those few professors whom I know that they have sometimes been shoved off the sidewalks by a solid phalanx of these young fellows, linked arm in arm. I have taught them that, as they were here beneficiaries of the State and the nation, receiving fine education free, it was both a courtesy and a duty that they owed to the State and to the college to show respect to officials. I have told them that when in the uniform of the battalion they should tender a soldierly salute. When not in uniform they should raise the hat to you and to every professor and instructor. Nine-tenths of them are doing it, and are the better for doing it. It is only the caddish and the vicious among them that refuse."

"I'm not so sure about that," said the President.

“Now, when *I* meet a student I take off my hat to *him*, then, if he’s a gentleman at heart, he takes off his to me. If he isn’t a gentleman I really prefer that he shouldn’t know me.”

Fane smiled. “One young man asked me if I expected him to tip his hat to you, sir, when he hadn’t even been introduced, and was surprised to be told yes. He then went on to say that he had raised his hat and the President looked so surprised he feared he’d been taking a liberty. At all events, the President did not return the salutation. Others, too, have told me that. It confirms my theory that it has not been a custom here in the past.”

“That is possibly so—that is possibly so,” said the President. “I am sometimes absent minded to a fault and fail to see what perhaps I should see. I shall certainly keep that in mind.” So the head of the college had a fair side to him after all. The interview was becoming productive of good results. The President, who was there to censure, was finding himself, perhaps, on the defensive. Moreover, this young man whom he had looked upon as some kind of a stage supernumerary, skilled in teaching the broadsword exercise and how to handle a musket, had moved apparently in other circles than that of the camp. This had not occurred to him on the two occasions when he had summoned the Faculty in general, once to a meeting at the chapel, once to a social affair at his house. The officer had been omitted

entirely. The two or three professors and professors' wives who noted the absence, ascribed it to the deep mourning worn by the stranger's mother and sisters, upon whom as yet none of their number had called. Yet their appearance on Sunday when they were seen on way to and from church was very much in their favor. They had come, however, without letters of introduction. Their friends, Colonel and Mrs. West, were gone. Then there were other reasons, too. Mrs. Fane and Clare had not been over-cautious in their allusions to the provincial nature of pretty much everything about them, animal, vegetable or mineral. Nor had good Mrs. Jamieson, the landlady, been slow as a transmitter of their expressed opinions.

Little by little, before the end of the six weeks, the President was beginning to see that this military business might prove to be an adjunct of value after all. Veteran professors told him that there was marked change in the language and demeanor of the so-called battalion students in the section room. They sat or stood up straight, were respectful in bearing, and surprising in that they said "sir," something hitherto almost unknown. It took the veterans back to old days at Yale and Harvard, Brown and Dartmouth. The Governor, a war-time soldier, and certain State officials had within that very week dazed the President by referring to the remarkable change for the better in the street manners of the student body. "Last year they nearly ran me into the

gutter," said the executive. "This year, by Jupiter, they actually salute me!" The President had gone home pondering. This thing he had branded as a necessary evil might have its good side after all. He had risen early that morning to see for himself the voluntary drill conducted before breakfast for the benefit of those who took lively interest in the matter. Reveille was sounded, and the flag run up at the gym, too far from Clifton Hall or the nearest lodging or fraternity houses to disturb anybody, yet it had been complained of by opponents of the military department. He, too, supposed the captain to be still in Chicago, and he wished to satisfy himself that there was no riotous disorder, as claimed. Suddenly he had been nearly swept off his feet by a rush of burly racers bursting through the grove, and then had fairly collided with their erstwhile leader, now but a rueful and raging follower, and the President had heard his explanation, and accusation. It had not occurred to him to ask what brought the party to the lake shore at this early and unusual hour. Stetson had the reputation of being an owl, not an early bird. Thinking only of the lesson to be inculcated, he had sent, three hours later, for the military instructor, and even while reproving him for a most unscriptural laying on of hands, had himself been betrayed into a vehement exploitation of the fault he condemned, and this too at the expense of the same victim. In spite of widely different teaching and temperament, the scholar and soldier had met on the

common plane of human frailty. In spite of mutual antagonism the two were being drawn together. The lamb and the lion might even yet have lain down together in mutual amity and regard, but it was not so to be. The janitor entered at the moment, after unanswered tapping at the door.

“A gentleman to see the President, sir, and can’t wait—Mr. Stetson.”

CHAPTER III

A CLASH IN CLASSICS

THE President looked perturbed. "It is not my hour for receiving," said he, "but this man and I have clashed continually. Perhaps you might go out this way," and the President indicated the door that led to the scene of the recent scuffle. Fane did not wish to go until he had made his formal report of young Stetson's misconduct, but the intimation admitted of no argument. "I'll return then at noon, sir," said he, and vanished.

It was about the middle of the second period. The students were all at recitation. After twelve, and more or less grudgingly, the President would receive and listen to callers on college matters, but he much preferred the Faculty should settle all questions at the weekly meeting. Some matters, however, would not wait, and Fane's was one of them. He held that an example should be made of young Stetson forthwith, and had determined to press the matter. With over an hour to wait he bethought himself of the library. He had no office, he had no room, he had no desk. The big barn of a gymnasium was unfurnished. He had so reported to the President

when asking for a place to keep his books, records, etc. The President, as usual, said he didn't know anything about that. He couldn't see why there *should* be any records or books in military drill, and if there were, why could they not be kept at home. "But you might take a chair in the library," said he, "and even have a desk there—if you've got a desk." Fane had no desk and the President had no funds available to buy one, and other use for them, had funds been available. Even the bulletin board and stationery the young officer found indispensable were ordered and paid for by himself. Thousands of dollars came to the college through the military department, but not one cent would it spend for the only department that paid for itself. The President had referred him to the Trustees, the Trustees were scattered, but the Chairman of the Executive Committee was in town. To him Fane had gone, only to be told the Committee could disburse nothing except on the written recommendation of the President. This, as it turned out, was not strictly true, but it was sufficient. It would be a month or more before the Trustees met, and he could bring his various claims before them. This morning, therefore, he found a seat in a dim corner of the library, and with pencil and paper went to work on certain estimates. Four or five students were reading at the tables. The librarian and his assistants were noiselessly at their work. They looked up curiously at the cavalry uniform, a strange and unaccustomed sight, but

said nothing. Two young girls from Clifton Hall, with their curly heads close together, were poring over some big book of reference in a window niche. Everything spoke of order and decorum. The big bell in the tower presently tolled the hour of eleven, whereat for a few minutes there were sounds of many footfalls on the flagstones without, and cheery voices on the autumn air. Then all was quiet again. Another period had begun. and Fane, tiring of his pencil work and seeking knowledge, strolled quietly about the book-bordered aisles and alcoves, and presently, over in a rather remote corner, deep hidden between sheltering walls of calf and vellum, he caught sight of the face and form of a fair reader, absorbed in her task. She never raised her head until, with a start, she realized the presence of this man in martial dress, and the color rushed to her face. It was the first time he had taken her utterly unawares. At the cedars, at early morn, she had heard him coming before he hove in sight. Here, there was not a second's warning. He saw the blush, and he blessed it. "Talking strictly forbidden," was the legend on the walls, so neither spoke, but silence was eloquent. Their lips moved and their eyes shone bright, yet both were embarrassed. "I had not dreamed this possible," he murmured.

"It mustn't be—again," she whispered in reply. Then, inconsequently, "Did you tell me Colonel West would be gone some time?"

"All winter, I fear. Tell me, you have met my sister, and—is it imagination?—she spoke as though you seemed to avoid her."

The color slowly mounted to the face that seemed so pale but the moment before he spoke. She bowed her head as though to think before replying. Then, her hands clasping above the heavy volume that lay before her, she looked one instant up into his eyes. The love in them burned even through her quickly lowered lids.

"I should have been so glad to know her—elsewhere," she answered faintly. "Everyone likes her, respects her. She is so capable, so cheerful and brave—an example to us others, but then——"

"Then what?" and he bent lower.

"I shrink from speaking to anyone of—last year, and of having known you, and I feared she might—ask."

"Jane is a silent woman, Miss Ethel. She says nothing about—any of you. I had to drag it out of her."

"That I seemed to avoid her?" Up glanced the violet, heavily fringed eyes again; then down.

"That—she had even met you. I was impatient. I had to ask."

"I wish—you hadn't. Please don't again."

"But, can't you see? It is only through her that I can hope to meet you."

"And that is just what—I wish to avoid."

"*Wish* to?" and now he straightened suddenly and drew away.

"Need to! Oh, you *know* what I mean, Captain Fane. It is——"

But here she, too, suddenly straightened and sat erect in her chair. The soft eyes that had begun to brim over now began to blaze. A flush of indignation swept to her brows, and, following the direction of her gaze, he who had again bent low at her sweet yet reluctant admission, whirled to his left and there, leering at them from the entrance to the little alcove, barely six feet away, stood a short, stout, florid, loudly-dressed man of fifty: an unprepossessing person at any time, a most objectionable specimen at the moment. But the grin about the coarse and bearded lips faded slowly. The bold insolence of his gaze died out of the red-rimmed eyes, for in an instant, planting himself between the intruder and the girl, Fane faced him squarely with an uncompromising "What do you want?" and the ring in the low-toned query lifted every head in the room and brought the librarian tip-toeing and remonstrant from his desk.

"I'm looking for Cap Fane," said the visitor uneasily, twirling his hat and shifting to the other foot, cased in its shiny patent leather.

"Fane is my name. 'Cap' is not my title. Come outside," was the answer, and the officer led the way to the outer air. At the head of the broad stone steps and in the full glare of the meridian sunshine he again turned upon his caller, and then almost recoiled,—startled.

Somewhere he had seen and known something in that face—or in the mate to that face; had seen, had known and had grown to hate it, for the sight of this one, already assuming apologetic, appeasing, conciliatory semblance of a smile, was enough to set his finger nails biting into his palm, and to fill his eyes with fire.

The man saw it,—the clinch of the white fist, the set of the teeth, the stern, intent, threatening gaze straight into his eyes, and sensibly he began to cringe. He had come confident, truculent, ready to bully. He was whipped without a sign of encounter.

“I just left old man Parsons,” he nervously began, “and he told me to see you. It’s about my boy.”

“One moment. Old man Parsons, did you say?” And the right hand, evading the moist and pudgy member extended in awkward essay, went up to the visor of the forage-cap and pulled it further down upon the scarred eyebrow, then drew back behind the hip.”

“Old man Parsons, yes,” was the hesitant answer. “The President, you know.”

“The President I *do* know, but never as Old Man Parsons,” and all the time Fane was studying that strangely familiar face with menacing eyes. The man who had come, as he told his bunch of cronies an hour before, “to eat up that young rooster,” was wilting under the unsparing scrutiny.

“Well—uh—Cap—Captain, it’s this way. That boy

of mine—*he* ain't fit to 'tend drill and tote a twenty-pound gun. He's been sickly ever since he was a kid."

"That's the reason he's out all night—gambling over at the Island?"

In spite of its mahogany flush a shade of gray stole over the coarse face, but it was not yet time to surrender.

"He only went out for a swim. You see he can't sleep now like he could before they began that damn early morning hornblowing up the hill," began the defender, but dropped it. That grim young fighting face in front of his had too much in reserve.

"That won't do, sir. You couldn't hire him to take a swim, with the frost thick on the shore. I saw the boatload of six coming back at reveille. Now to cut this short, I have reported your son absent from every drill but one since the term began, and for tendering a certificate he knew to be false. I have much more to report of him now."

"But, Captain, just a minute. The old—the President—said I was just to see you and we could fix it up between us. I ain't saying the boy's all right, only you see he worked this game through all last year without their making him drill, and he thought he could work it again. You'd do the same if you were a boy."

But Fane held up his hand. "Mr. Stetson," said he "it is no longer a matter of drill. It is a matter of decency. In five minutes I mean to recommend his

expulsion. You can come and say what you like to the President, but——”

And here the great bell in the tower began its solemn toll of twelve. From halls and corridors in the adjacent buildings the students came trooping noisily forth. From the doorway behind them three or four young girls stepped into the sunlight and glanced half curiously, half timidly at the strangely assorted pair, opposites in almost every detail of feature, form and dress. Then came the librarian, ushering before him a few laggards and holding open the heavy door for others still to follow. His assistant came and went, and still he stood, looking back, impatient. And finally She came, hurriedly and with downcast eyes, and Fane lifted his cap and bowed low, a reverence she noticed with the merest upward sweep of the lids, the faintest inclination of the head, and passed swiftly down the broad steps and round the eastern corner, followed by the eyes of two, at least, until out of sight.

Then when Fane, without further word to his visitor, would have started for the office, the latter spoke. He was tremulous now with wrath.

“You may think, young feller, that you’re cock of this walk,” said he, “but there’s more’n one way of bringing a man to his senses. You get that boy of mine into trouble and, by God, I’ll settle *you* if it takes a million!” He clapped his low-topped Derby on his round head with vindictive thump. “Perhaps *that* will be one

way!" and a jerk of the head in the direction taken by Miss Hoyt told too well what he meant.

Fane was back in a twinkling, his own face now white with fury, his rattan switch shaking in his clinched right hand. The big man backed off until held by the railing. The librarian uplifted his hands. "Oh, don't—oh, please!" he cried, aghast at such utterly unclassical symptoms. Professor Sharpe, passing rapidly, seemed to read the indications at a glance, and ran to the steps. He, too, had grown to like the soldier, and with consternation in his eyes saw that one available hand uplifted as though to strike. Instantly he sprang and seized the supple wrist. "Not that! Not that, Captain!" he pleaded. "Come with me. I know this man," and sought to draw him away. But Fane stood fast, though he lowered his arm. He was quivering from head to foot, and when he found words to speak the hardened bully above him on the steps shrank, despite his assumed bravado.

"Somewhere I have seen you—or your double—before. Now, mark my words. Threaten me all you please or dare, but attempt to carry out that—last threat,—you know what I mean, you blackguard,—and you'll never bully again!"

Then Sharpe led him, still quivering, away.

Five days later there was a lively discussion at the meeting of the Faculty. The President, the Board of Professors and most of the elder instructors were pres-



‘ FANE WAS BACK IN A TWINKLING, HIS OWN FACE NOW WHITE WITH FURY ’

[illegible]

ent. The head of the military department had, as yet, never been bidden to attend. When later called upon to say how or why it had not occurred to him that it was Captain Fane's right and privilege to appear, and that he should have been invited, the President said he really didn't know. It never had occurred to him, however, that a soldier had any place in that body, or would even care to attend. There was no one, therefore, to represent the case of what might be called the General Government vs. Stetson. Of all the names on the undergraduate rolls this one stood pre-eminent as having been most frequent before the Faculty. They all knew it, and knew no good of it. They had heard, many of them, that it was freighted now with charges that were more serious than ever before. They had heard, some of them, the student's side of the story, for, accompanied by one of the Trustees, a politician of much prominence and some power, the father had called upon several of their number. They had heard, a limited few, like Sharpe and Lorimer, that the instructor's charges, if sustained, would warrant expulsion or prolonged suspension. They had heard, none of them, the entire story, nor was it likely they ever would, with Fane unsummoned. They were assembled in some embarrassment, because in the minds of many of them this thought was uppermost: Action adverse to that particular student would crystallize the antagonism of that particular Trustee.

Of just what arguments were brought to bear, of the precise nature of the conference, no man present could or would thereafter give accurate account. It was admitted that the President opened the case in "gingerly" fashion, which, being interpreted, meant that there was no "ginger," in the modern acceptance of the term, in either his prelude or his summing up. It was remembered that several spoke pathetically of this view of the case,—that the youth had been motherless for many years, the father immersed in business (he owned three saloons within the corporate limits of Groveton and another on the Island) and there had been no one to guard the lad from evil. Another point was the paternal devotion now so vividly in evidence. It was much to the credit of Stetson, senior, himself destitute of college or religious training, that he should be so bent on his boy's obtaining both under the guidance of our President. (A capital point, that!) It was hinted delicately, diplomatically, that, while the natural enthusiasm of American youth for military glory, and the drill as now conducted, something in the nature of a new toy, made a combination that served to develop unusual and unlooked-for interest in a large number of students, there were still young men who seriously opposed it, and it was intimated that such young men were made the object of especial—perhaps spite was too strong a word to employ—especial *attention* on part of the new and very zealous instructor, who, it might be said without dis-

paragement or prejudice, was possibly a trifle intolerant of unmilitary men or methods. He had been so long "encased in the West Point strait-jacket" that he had as yet not sufficiently broadened, it might be hazarded; to appreciate the true characteristics of the young American citizen. In fine, while there was much to be said, as remarked one gifted professor, on both sides, there was little said except on one. After an hour of the sort of talk recorded above, the Faculty were in more than complaisant mood and the whole case might have gone by default had not Lorimer finally got the eye of the President and the ear of his fellows. Sharpe had made one or two attempts, but the President, apparently, would not give him the floor. Lorimer spoke, spoke cautiously, courteously and yet to the point. He was one of the very few, he said, who had made the acquaintance of the young officer. He had seen in him nothing of the martinet, but very much of the gentleman. He was impressed with his arguments and his earnestness, and he deemed it due to the Government, to the college, to the Faculty and to the instructor himself that the latter should be heard. He therefore moved that the whole subject be postponed until next regular meeting, a fortnight hence, and that Captain Fane be invited to attend and address them.

Glad enough to temporize, the Faculty so voted, the President so ordered,—adding of his own motion, however, that, pending final action, the student in the case,

“while not expected to drill, would attend all classes,” which gave that ingenuous youth the appearance of having come out topmost in the fight, as he continued to be present at such functions as he choose to attend, and absent from all others.

It was an arrangement that could not fail to bear fruit, and bitter fruit at that.

In his brief arraignment of the student Fane had confined himself to his deliberate absences, to his false certificate, and to his blasphemous abuse of an instructor. In no wise had Miss Hoyt been referred to. It was a question from sister Jane that opened the brother's eyes to the fact that despite his caution her name might be dragged in. It was the anxiety and the instant flush in his face that opened her eyes to the possibilities in the case, and Jane was wise. She did not press her question. She wached and waited. The mother had been ailing a bit. The sofa and the magazines had been her solace of late, for Lady Clare had troubles of her own, and was not too helpful. The mother missed, and missed inexpressibly, the gayety and gossip of garrison life—the attentions paid the wife of the commanding officer. Never until now had she found herself the object of so little consideration. Pet, engrossed in her young husband and her wifely and social duties, wrote only twice a week, when the mother would barely have been content had she written twice a day. Clare had been moping much, and was too full of sighing to be a comfort. Jane

and Ronald had many busy hours each day at college, yet managed to spend their evenings mostly at the mother's side, and to give her some time every afternoon. By common consent she was to be told little or nothing of any unpleasant experience either Jane or he might encounter; but, in that bustling community, it was unlikely that she should hear nothing of what so vehemently interested her son. The four—mother, daughters and son—occupied a little table in the dining-room separate from that of the students, which was thrice daily crowded with joyous, eager young fellows in the prime of life and vigor, lads who were often in uproarious spirits and were seldom silent. The mother had persuaded herself she was accepting her changed fortunes and her hard luck with Christian resignation and cheerfulness, but Jane could see, as well as others, how the son was saddened by her frequent moan. Jane saw, too, how his spirit and temper were being tried by the annoyances and obstacles thrown in his way. She heard—she could not help hearing among the “co-eds,” her pupils—all manner of student chatter and gossip about the affairs in the military department. Then she began to hear other whispers and to note the eagerness of his questions about Miss Hoyt. Then she remembered what someone had written the summer so long ago, so very long ago, it seemed, though it was but the previous year, of Ronald's devotions to a girl at West Point. Wisely therefore she waited. She would not add to his worries

now, for they were many. Everything depended on that Faculty meeting. She would wait for that.

It came and, sharp at the appointed time, Fane was on hand. Sharpe and Lorimer greeted him with much cordiality and presented him to one or two elders who had expressed a desire to meet him. The President came, and without greeting to anybody went straight to business. The cases of certain students reported for absence from recitations or "rhetoricals," and for minor infractions of college rules, were taken up and discussed with much spirit, and Fane sat a silent listener. He noted that while a certain few of the Faculty said little or nothing,—that one, indeed, of their number sat with closed eyes,—there were others that were keenly alert in every case, and the Professor of Oratory and Elocution spoke upon all. The President would let the talk and argument proceed until it wearied him, then, with abrupt decision, end it by the announcement that Student So-and-So would be suspended, sustained, penalized or admonished, as seemed to him expedient or necessary, and in four cases out of five there was not a murmur of dissent. Fane could not fail to see that the decisions met the view of the majority, and that "the punishment fit the crime." What he asked himself, after much more than an hour's observation, was, Why the cases were submitted to the Faculty at all? for the President decided without reference to the argument. It was late in the day, and all were wearied when at last the President announced,

“And now we come to the last case, that of Stetson, held over from last meeting. I shall ask Mr.—er—Captain Fane, if he is present” (for the President had not seemed to see him) “to state the case from his point of view.”

Fane had sometimes figured as judge advocate of a general court, and was not unused to presenting a case. Hitherto his auditors had been made up exclusively of military men. Here there was not one. Some in fact were women. He spoke briefly, and had schooled himself to speak calmly. From his point of view, the West Point view, the presentation of a false certificate was the gravest offense. He was surprised to find that it seemed to make but faint impression. He finished somewhat lamely, abruptly, and amidst silence. The President reflected a moment, then spoke:

“This whole matter is, I confess, perplexing to me for various reasons. Mr.—the captain—regards it more seriously than I had been prepared to expect. He has indeed referred to his duties, in conversation with me, in a way to make me suppose that he considers that we are bound to require our students to attend these drills whether they like it or not. Am I—not right?”

Fane again arose. “That is certainly my view, sir. It is what I should call an implied contract. The Government agrees to give the college what amounts to so much money,—in this case what amounts to one-fifth the total annual income,—in consideration of its, in

turn, maintaining instruction in military tactics and discipline. If the question be left to the students whether they shall or shall not receive instruction, they probably will decide they should not, in which case, as I look at it the only duty left to me to perform would be to promptly inform the War Department of the decision and await further orders. Failing to comply with your share of the compact would entail, in my opinion, forfeiture of the Government bounty."

"How is that, Professor Beerbohm?" asked the President abruptly.

A tall, bearded, spectacled man found his feet and his tongue at the same instant. He looked straight at Fane, not at the Chair, and he spoke with austerity and decision.

"If this question is new here," said he, "it is not so at the University of Fredonia, as I happen to know. Three years ago the officer sent to us there started in with the same proposition, but had to drop it. Drills were unpopular and obstructive, and have been dispensed with entirely!"

Then the Professor sat down, and the silence was intense.

Fane presently arose. "May I ask," said he addressing the Chair, "whether the drills were dispensed with by War Department or University authority?"

"I don't know anything about that," answered the President, "but Professor Beerbohm knows whereof he

speaks. What has been decided *there* may well apply to us here."

Fane slid a hand into the breast pocket of his blouse and drew forth a small memorandum book.

"The information given by Professor Beerbohm," said he slowly, "is certainly valuable, though possibly not in the way intended. The professor cannot be mistaken?" he asked, this time addressing that gentleman. "The drills were entirely dispensed with?"

"Entirely, and nearly two years ago."

"And the income from the sale of public lands—that also was—dispensed with?"

"Not at all! That was never contemplated."

"Perhaps not," said Fane. "I fancy, however, that we shall hear further as to that," and, resuming his seat he began to write. He desired to record the exact words of Professor Beerbohm while the matter was still fresh in his mind, and Professor Beerbohm, noting it, flushed uneasily.

"What I said," he began again, and without rising, "was purely for the information of the members here present. I have no desire to appear as an informant against the University of Fredonia."

"What the gentleman said," responded Fane, rising and addressing the Chair, "was plainly for the purpose of influencing this body,—impressing it with the idea that this institution may dispense with military instruction without violating an implied contract. If the gentle-

man is right, then I am all wrong, and my mission here is ended."

This was indeed a new and hitherto undreamed of state of affairs. Fane's immediate predecessor as drill instructor had been but a brief time in the army, had much preferred the arts of peace, had gradually worked into another department and finally into a different sphere. Just as gradually as he had gone up in collegiate circles the military department had gone down. "A necessary evil," the President had called it the previous year. Now, if Beerbohm were right it was not even a necessary, it was an unmitigated, evil. If the Department were an evil, then were the students warranted in their stand against it; then was Stetson a martyr, and Fane a martinet. To press the question then and there would have resulted in Fane's defeat, as Sharpe and Lorimer saw, and just as the Professor of Elocution arose to his feet and began with the customary "It seems to me there is much yet to be said on both sides," the President impatiently broke in:

"And it should be said only by those who know something about it! Professor Beerbohm is confident of his position: Mr.—er—Captain Fane is confident of his. Until we can settle this question we cannot settle that of Stetson. The entire matter is therefore laid over until next meeting, and this is adjourned." It was the President's way and will, and the Faculty long had bowed to both.

But Professor Beerbohm came to Fane at the foot of the stairs:

“I hope you appreciate my position—er—Captain, and that I am not to be quoted in this matter,” said he, “especially if any injury may be done Fredonia.”

“You spoke publicly, Professor Beerbohm,” was the uncompromising reply. “I shall not give your name unless called for, but your words go to Washington to-night.”

CHAPTER IV

MISCHIEF AFOOT

THERE was the mischief to pay on College Hill. Ten days more immunity from either drill or penalty had put young Stetson on a pinnacle. Ten days had brought letters that put Beerbohm in a plight. The drills at Fredonia had indeed been dispensed with, as was said, only such students as "volunteered" being on the rolls of the retired army officer there on duty, and these few "drilled" only when the spirit moved them—which was seldom. All on a sudden an inspector appeared; put questions to the President and the Professor of Military Science; took down their answers, and went his way. The officer knew what it meant, and told the President to look out for squalls. This happened just about the time that a letter came from Professor Beerbohm intimating that perhaps he had been indiscreet, and that they had a young man at Groveton "who seemed disposed to make trouble." That was enough to stamp Beerbohm as the witless betrayer, for these were days before the Government started the system of regular inspection of its subsidized colleges, and this episode was one of the reasons. There came an indignant, injured letter from the head of Fre-

donia to his fellow head of Groveton. It was an ungenerous thing in one great institution so to injure the business interests of another, and indeed the head of Groveton was quite ready to take that view of it, and so taking, sent for Mr.—a—Captain Fane and said that hereafter when he had any criticism to make of the management of college affairs he preferred them to be made to him, the President, and not to “outsiders.” It was not the proper thing for members of the Faculty of one institution to be interfering in the affairs of another, and he deprecated any such action as Mr. Fane had taken in this matter. Fane replied with rising temper, but with respectful tone and manner, that Professor Beerbohm had spoken *coram publico*, had pointed to Fredonia’s immunity from consequences as warrant for like disregard at Groveton, and it was his duty, in his opinion, to lose no time in warning both the Government and Groveton. He *had* warned the Government. He now warned Groveton.

It fairly staggered the President. He had had to deal, hitherto, only with men bound solely to him and the college. Here was a youth who could indeed “perceive a divided duty.” Then more letters came from Fredonia, upbraiding Beerbohm, and that sorely badgered scientist conceived it just to say that Captain Fane had taken advantage of “words spoken in debate,” of “a privileged communication,” in fact,—something not intended to go outside that room, yet expected to have

overwhelming effect within. But the first time Beer-bohm opened his guns in this wise in presence of the officer in question, Fane fired up and sent so sharp a reply that more than ever did the President and a certain few of his followers look upon the soldier as "a disturbing element," and so refer to him.

But there were other members, and not a minority now, whose eyes were opening to the facts at issue, and who clearly saw whither they had been drifting. "This matter," said they, "has never before been shown us in the proper light. Now if you can only make it comprehensible to the Trustees——"

But *there* was the rub! West had gone far eastward. Of the two local members of the Executive Committee one was deep in politics, the other in plans for higher education. The former could see things only as they affected his prospects for office; the other, a most amiable divine, only through the spectacles of the President. They hailed from the same New England town and college.

But even these gentlemen heard with alarm of the result at Fredonia, whose President wrote that, thanks to the "impertinent interference" of this new drill-master at Groveton, they had been notified that unless the conditions of the act were in future faithfully observed, steps would be taken to recover the income derived from government lands. It would seem, therefore, that among the Dons of both sister institutions

some intemperate talk and wrath had been aroused, not, of course, at the expense of the Trustees and officials, who, knowing the law, had sought its benefits and slighted its obligations; not at the expense of those who would take without paying, but wholly at the expense of the "drill master" referred to and the self-snared, unwilling, unhappy witness who had brought Fredonia to book. One of the President's pet topics when sermonizing had been the relaxation of public morals consequent upon the great war,—“the host of discharged soldiery, with all the vices of the camp, turned loose upon peace-loving, law-abiding, God-fearing communities,” and now, lo! here was a soldier daring to preach to him and to others, law-abiding and God-fearing, as to the meaning of a moral obligation. The President felt sorely aggrieved, and said so, wherein he showed himself, after all, much more human than divine. How many another preacher has there lived with volumes of rebuke for other people's sins and never a thought of his own! How many a friend is gifted with phenomenal insight into our shortcomings, but has no eyes for his, or her, individual iniquities! And now Fredonia and Groveton, like many another caught in the act, really suffered far less from the contemplation of their sins of omission than from chagrin at being found out. Beerbohm and Fane, antagonistic from the start, had come at least to one point in common. Each was the object of hearty condemnation from “others in authority.”

It was at this stage of the proceedings that Fane became conscious of a new element of mischief. In some way the matter had got into the local press. Provincial editors could not well be expected to know too much of Federal law and of acts of Congress passed and forgotten in the earlier days of the civil war. It was enough for them that something out of the common run of collegiate rows had settled on Groveton, and there was never a time when their reporters could not find voluble tale bearers. Indeed, it is more than probable that at this time tongues and pens were both inspired, for Fane was "catching it" right and left, and poor Mrs. Fane was frantic. She had known nothing heretofore of any life save that guarded with every show of respect, surrounded by the very atmosphere of deference and courtesy. Fort Sheridan, that journalistic stamping ground and School for Scandal, had not then been projected, and the poor lady had never dreamed of the flights to which newspaper imaginings could soar. It was nothing new to Fane. He had been on duty at West Point when the first Ethiopian appointees appeared there, and certain New York journals thought they had found opportunity to wreck the fair fame of the national school. He had served in the West, and been favored with many a "marked copy" expressive of editorial views on the atrocities of our troops in Indian campaign when the atrocities were all on the other side. He had been where orders were orders, and he did as orders

demanded, no matter what the papers might say. But now, between what was hinted in collegiate cloisters and hatched in the sanctums, a condition indeed serious came to confront him.

He had been conscious, of course, for weeks, of the impudence of street loafers and small boys—the grins and nudgings that greeted his coming—the shouted imitation words of command, the jeers and cat-calls that followed his goings. It was humiliating and vexatious, Heaven knows, but he was helpless. With only one arm to fight with, he could not resent; with no law to protect him, he could not even protest. It is one of the penalties of serving our people as a soldier that he who wears the livery must bear their abuse. It is only of late the populace has begun to show honor to the flag. It is too soon, perhaps, to say when they will show respect for the uniform. Thus far, as a rule, that uniform is honored only when it comes in mass and with shotted guns. The one policeman of the suburb, to whom Fane quietly referred the matter, said he'd "run 'em in" if caught in the act, but added: "'Twould do no good. Them fellers owns us, and so long as they don't stone us they can say what they like," which proved to be practically true, as Fane soon found.

Ten days of immunity from drill or penalty, as has been said, had put young Stetson on a pinnacle. Twenty days had now gone by without bringing the feverish sore to a head, for the President had gone to speak on the

Ethics of Education at a great Western university, and had left directions that the case of Stetson should not be called until his return. Faculty meeting, therefore, had been destitute of its usual exhilaration. The student in question had been boasting on the campus, and his father on the street corners, that, so far from being punished, he was being upheld by the President. It stimulated the few recalcitrants. It staggered a bit the growing faith of the battalion in their instructor. Stetson passed him at first with no other greeting than an impudent leer, but, emboldened by whiskey, the gathering dusk and a gang at his back, he presently went still further.

It was a gusty November evening. Fane was coming briskly down the lakeside walk after a sharp and exhilarating drill. It was his duty to see the last man out of the gymnasium, and to lock the door. The students who went his way toward town were therefore always well ahead, and he came on alone. Students traveled in squads of six or eight, as a rule, and in supporting distance, for it was a favorite pastime of a lot of young ruffians from the shops and saloons of a near-by suburb to cruise about the corners at nightfall in hopes of waylaying some stray collegian; the street blackguard, like that other savage, the Apache, fighting best when ten to one. To such as these Fane in his cavalry uniform and crippled condition offered a tempting mark, but an indefinite sense of uncertainty as to the young regular's possibilities as a pistol shot, in case that arm were carried as was the obviously

crippled one, had restricted their affronts to those described. Fane had, however, abandoned that route and taken the longer and more solitary way along the lake. It led him first through a dense grove on the college grounds, thence down to the shore and under the rocky cliffs where he had met Ethel Hoyt, and so, by many turnings, to the scattered homesteads in the midst of which he had found temporary lodgment for himself and the mother and sister dependent upon him. Just as the almost wintry gloaming was settling down upon the peaceful scene—here, as he rounded a rocky point and came within view of “the white walls of his home,” he became aware of half a dozen young fellows, some of the same gang he had hitherto encountered about the corners of the avenue beyond, roosting on a low, flat-topped stone wall beside the pathway, and tossing stones across it into the plashing waters.

Feigning not to note his coming, though every face was toward him as he turned the point, and he saw it and knew that they were there for his benefit, they kept up the rapid fusillade, and he had either to stop and wait for them to desist, or take the chance of being hit. He chose the latter, and went ahead, wherein, said the President, later, he was entirely wrong: he should have politely asked them to permit him to pass, and they undoubtedly would have done it. Through the slanting fire he went unscathed until opposite the fifth man, whose missile glanced from his right shoulder-strap, just under his chin

and thence into the lake. That might have been an accident: what followed was not. There was a sniggering laugh; then, as he neither faltered nor turned, a more aggressive move. He had caught sight of Stetson seated at the end of the row, and a voice he instantly recognized as Stetson's called mockingly after him:

“Hello, Cap! How are you now?”

It was a pound too much, and as the hot blood flashed to the soldier's temples and he whirled about to face the pot-valiant gang, a stone, better aimed and weighty, struck him squarely between the eyes. Human nature could stand no more. Spirit and temper had been sorely tried for weeks. Though he reeled an instant from the shock and through a million dancing stars he saw the treetops turning red, his one good hand instinctively flew to the guard of the light sabre at his side, and the long blade leaped from the scabbard as he sprang at his taunting foe. Quick to scent danger as to invite it, every sinner of their number was already off the wall, and away. Only the rearmost could the bleeding and half blinded soldier overtake, and him, howling blasphemy and protestation, Fane battered over the legs with the back of his blade until the fellow stumbled and fell on his face, then with the flat thrashed him over the buttocks until, scrambling and cursing, the victim managed to get away, leaving the victor to stanch his own wound and for the moment, at least, to mourn his luck that the one brute he punished was not the one who most deserved it—Stetson himself.

When that episode was duly aired before the President on the officer's report of the student's action and language. Fane's story was about as above ; that of Stetson and his corroborating backers was to the effect that the officer had taken offense at the student's simply asking how he was, and because he had been accidentally hit with pebbles they were pitching into the lake. The witnesses were five to one against him, and the President called his attention to that significant fact.

CHAPTER V

“STAND TO YOUR GUNS!”

THERE were three reasons why our some time hero did not quit in deep chagrin, if not disgust. One was that he knew that, in spite of an adverse Fate and partially adverse Faculty, he was meeting with marked success among the students. He hated to be beaten. He knew he could win, and the doctrine of fight to which he was born said—Stand to your guns! and make them feel your mettle. A second reason was that it had cost much to come away home from the Pacific, and much more to bring the mother, sister, self and belongings from the Eastern seaboard to the Western town. To move again meant more money, and he hadn't a dollar to spare. The third reason, briefly stated, was—Ethel Hoyt. For six days he had had no sight of, and for two weeks no speech with, her. Jane had heard she was not well—had had disturbing news from relatives, and Jane was set against intruding in any way. Miss Hoyt had not encouraged Miss Fane's by no means too cordial advances, and Jane went nowhere, she said, where she was not heartily welcome. She spoke, perhaps, in a moment of sisterly spleen and petulance, having one of those nerve-racking torments best known as a schoolroom headache. She had begun to tell herself that Ronald had come to

this place, where he was so utterly underrated and misunderstood, and where they were all so thoroughly unhappy, on account and in pursuit of that girl; which was not at all the case, as she could have learned for the asking, but she would not ask. Womanlike, Jane would rather cherish a poignant and jealous pang than yield a point. She saw that her brother was chafing his heart out over the situation—losing sleep, flesh and peace of mind, and she wanted to believe that it was all because of Miss Hoyt, instead of mainly due to herself. Many a fond-hearted sister has been just as fool-headed!

But, exasperating as was the situation when the President, after hearing young Stetson's side of the story and that of his street-bred supporters, dismissed the affair as “something Mr. Fane must expect in a community where rum is master,” there was really worse to come. What the President meant to imply was that the saloon was responsible for the occurrence, that he could not control the saloon, and that the Trustees and the municipal authorities, and not he, should take cognizance of the matter. What he succeeded in effecting was another victory for the cad element, largely in the minority among the students but nevertheless there, and the decision speedily bore its fruit.

On the one hand, the Stetson-led faction, less than seven in number all told, was now encouraged to think that “Prex” was their backer, and they planned further mischief accordingly. On the other, it was represented to

Fane that, finding him intractable, the President had taken this means of driving him out in disgust. Whatever the motive, the deed had the very opposite result. Fane set his teeth and swore he'd stick it through and teach his opponents to respect his department and teach them in spite of themselves. His mother's lamentations gave him much distress of mind. She took so much to heart the slurs and innuendoes that frequently appeared in two of the papers. She could not understand it that so very few of the ladies, either of Town or Gown, had called. She thought it scandalous that only two professors had shown that attention to her son. Handsome Clare was not worrying so much just now, she having found an ardent admirer in the young rector of St. Paul's. It lifted her at once from the contemplation of her own woes to the suffering of a dozen other dear lambs of the fold, deeply interested in the daily doings of that most attractive divine. Jane, apparently absorbed in her new and trying duties, was thinking of and for Ronald more than he knew, but saying little because of a cloud that had come between them. She did not wish to talk of Miss Hoyt. He, evidently, had too much interest in the subject. Six months earlier she would have scorned the imputation of spying on a girl in hopes of evidence in support of her suspicions. For six days past she had been giving ear to stories that Miss Hoyt was "interested in some gentleman," and that gentleman was not the brother Jane so deeply and jealously loved.

Other teachers dwelling in Clifton Hall had seen letters that came for Miss Hoyt, addressed in sprawling masculine hand, and they were coming as often as twice a week. Younger women—students there resident and admirers of Miss Hoyt’s decided beauty, grace and style—were forever chatting about her, and speculating as to the cause of her coming to so ill-paid, ill-starred a lot as that of a teacher. Previous letters for Miss Hoyt had been received; some in business-looking envelopes from a law firm in the East, others addressed in feminine hand, a few, in black-bordered envelopes, that bore the post-mark of Eastern cities and pleasure resorts. It was late in October that the frequent appearance of others still began to be noticed. All mail for Clifton Hall came to the matron’s office and was there distributed. None of its inmates was supposed to have a box of her own at the post-office. There were reasons for this, and rather good ones.

But this was not all. Miss Fane walked over to the Hall one evening to see a pupil who had been ill. It was late when she went. It was after ten and closing time when she left, and at 10:15, turning suddenly into the dark and arborlike pathway—a short cut from the main avenue to the side street—she came upon a couple faintly discernible under a massive elm—a young man pleading; a young woman in tears. Neither seeing nor hearing distinctly, Miss Fane hurried by, a strange flutter at her heart. Something in the poise of the slender, graceful figure so dimly visible, something in a mere turn

of the head and the murmur of a word or two, told her that the girl was Ethel Hoyt.

A rule of the Hall was that the main door should be closed at ten, and that the door-keeper should furnish the matron with the names of all admitted after that hour. The list was placed on the matron's desk. Anyone having business with the matron might casually glance at it. Miss Fane had no particular business with the matron next day, the Hall was rather out of her way, but she called again to see her pupil, who was up and out. She called again upon the matron, who was in, and the list lay before her on the desk. "Miss Hoyt, 10:25 p. m." was one of the three entries.

The meeting of the Faculty was to occur on Friday afternoon. The case of Stetson, postponed on one plea or another, was then to be decided. The father had been out of town for several days, and no one knew what might be plotting until, on Friday morning, Fane came down to his early breakfast and found a local paper underneath his plate. Three or four students at table in the adjoining room respectfully bade him good-morning and he had a cheery word with them before taking his seat. The page was so folded that uppermost lay, heavily marked, an article that read as follows:

THE STUDENT VS. THE SWORD

It is understood that when the Faculty of the State College assembles this afternoon formal action will be taken on the

case of the army lieutenant who made the vicious assault upon certain students and inoffensive citizens during the week gone by. While, as hitherto stated, we think that the charge should be assault with deadly weapon, and that it was a matter demanding the action of the Courts, it is characteristic of the magnanimity of the persons most concerned that they refuse to prosecute an officer whose infirmities of temper may possibly be aggravated by certain injuries from which he is said to be suffering. It appears, however, that sympathy is somewhat misplaced in the matter, as it is an open secret that this is by no means the first time, both at college and on campaign, that the conduct, or rather misconduct, of the officer in question has been the subject of deserved criticism. We have it on indisputable authority that this is the lieutenant whose incapacity, if nothing worse, resulted in heavy loss to a detachment under his command, and to a scathing rebuke from his superior officer. Why were not these things told before?

Fane read ; rose slowly from his chair ; thrust the paper into the open grate, and turned back to his waiting breakfast. Many eyes were upon him. He had reddened a moment and then gone pale. With enforced calm and simulated appetite he remained a while at the little table reserved for him and his. Jane had not yet appeared. Mrs. Fane and Clare never came until all other boarders were gone. When, sword at his side, he presently left the house, he found two students waiting for him at the gate.

They saluted, and the spokesman said :

“ Captain Fane, we wish to say to you that no member of the battalion put that paper at your plate. We believe

a servant did it, and that she had no idea of the contents, but that it was given to her for the purpose. Of course we have seen it, and the men whom we've met unite in denouncing it. The whole thing is the work, probably, of old Stetson."

"When did he return?" asked Fane. He did not wish to discuss the matter. He desired to be alone, but the loyalty of these young fellows was not a thing to be ignored. He thanked them, told them it was a matter he would think of before acting, then led the way to the gymnasium. A janitor, meeting them at the gateway to the grounds, handed him a letter:

"It came with the President's mail, sir, a few days ago, and he was away, so he didn't see it until last night."

It was from Hazlett. Fane knew the hand at a glance and tore open the envelope as he trudged up the hill. Within was a little missive from his gentle friend and nurse of the previous winter. How long ago it seemed! How much older he had grown, and sadder! How much he stood now in need of such friends as these and how few were they! Yet the first words gave him comfort:

We are coming to Chicago, dear Fane. Price wrote that his wife couldn't stand the climate, and asked to exchange. Her Serene Highness said yes, which settled it even up to the A. G. O. So behold us packing in preparation for the journey. Now there is possibility of our meeting in the near future, and it occurred to me that, before settling in winter quarters in

the Windy City, we might come, by way of, and Mrs. Hazlett might bide a while at, Groveton. It is as you say. Send a night message, for we should be leaving here Thursday next.

“And here it is Friday,” thought Fane, “and they’ve been wondering over my silence.”

I suppose you hear occasionally from Turner and Truscott, and so have all the regimental news. Our fellows are all out of Arizona by this time, and yours will be following in another year. Mrs. Stannard’s last letter to my better half was full of interest, but we’ll talk over all that when we meet. Just what influence our former post commander may possess is more than I can say. It saved him an official lashing last spring, and now he has six months’ leave. I presume he will appear in Chicago, perhaps is there already, in which case I hope he may go his way before I get there. Now, forgive me, Fane, if I intrude advice where none is asked, but, knowing how just was your wrath against him,—knowing, too, just how deep,—I hope you will not meet him. Your good name and fame, in spite of him, are established,—known of all men.

“How little he knows,” thought Fane bitterly.

He stands rebuked in like measure. Therefore, say I, don’t seek him,—don’t *see* him. In an affair with him of any kind you would have nothing to gain and everything, perhaps, to lose. We have learned to love you and to have high hopes of your future in the profession you adorn, so do nothing to jeopard your prospects.

I am wondering if you have heard about Hayden, whom you dared so much to save. I wonder if he was worth half the

risk. I had a letter from Turner two days ago. The men, he says, "still talk of Fane," but don't know what to think of Hayden. He had been sent down to the Colorado on escort duty last month; got into a row with a man in "K" Troop; was placed under guard; broke out, escaped, and has been declared a deserter. They say he took the mail stage to the coast. Where could he have got the money? Frankly, I never thought much of that young fellow, though I remember that the major seemed to favor him.

Mrs. Hazlett sends the enclosed, so I presume she conveys her own messages.

Yours as ever,

HAZLETT.

So Major Piggott was East on leave, and Hayden a deserter. How odd to read of them and their doings! A few months back Fane could hardly drive the former out of his thoughts. For the last few weeks he had hardly thought of him at all, so engrossing had become his cares and perplexities at college. He was standing alone now, reading his letter under the shade of the elms at the edge of the green campus. The students had gone on to the gymnasium; others were following; all eyeing him curiously, many of them sympathetically, as they passed, for all had seen or heard of that stinging and misleading article. Mechanically he returned their salutes, but turned farther away into the grove before opening the little enclosure. It was only a wee note, but it stirred him strangely, even at a time when he was athrill with nervous wrath over the new wrong dealt him. For a moment this, too, was forgotten as he read:

DEAR FRIEND—ALWAYS:

We have been seeing much of Mr. Furlong who was with you at the Point two summers ago, and he has had much to tell us of a girl in whom I feel more interest than you express. He says that it is generally believed that her father's business misfortunes were mainly due to a Mr. Betts; that Mr. Betts had pursued her with his attentions in spite of her repugnance, and that her quitting her father's roof—such roof as was left to them after the crash—was practically to rid herself of Betts and his importunities. He says further that she is teaching French at some Western college, and he thinks it the very one to which you were lately ordered. I can hardly believe it, because you surely would tell me, would you not? Yet you have written no line since the week you went on duty. I do hope—well, you know what I hoped, and said, when we parted at Sandy, and now I'm looking forward to be told of her, perhaps to seeing her at Groveton. Shall I not?

Yours,

E. E. H.

What *was* there to tell her? What opportunity would there now be, even had he anything but sorrow to speak of! The ill fortune that had seemed to hound his every move of late pursued him even in this. It was now too late to wire. They would have started, and he knew not by which route or train. They would hardly come by way of Groveton now, in view of his silence, and he longed for them, longed for Hazlett's stanch friendship and support—for her sweet, womanly sympathy. The big bell boomed the hour; the stirring peal of the bugle followed at the gymnasium; he heard the “Here!” “Here!” of

the young voices and the thud of the gun butts on the floor as the sergeants called their rolls. One or two belated lads came panting up the slope, red-faced and worried, "coming down to a walk" at sight of him, saluting and then hastening on, but he called them to him. Sorrow and vexation had only served to make him sympathetic. "We'll go in together," he said, half smiling. "Car off the track?"

They shook their heads. "My fault, sir, I'm 'fraid," said the foremost. "I thought we had more time, and——" he glanced down at the left hand. The knuckle was bleeding. "We turned back a minute."

"Some of that street gang again?" queried Fane.

"Three of 'em, sir, at the second corner. I don't care to say what they said, but—I laid one of 'em out."

"I think I know," said Fane grimly. "Don't fight my battles, gentlemen. I'll settle those presently," then turned on toward the gymnasium.

At the doorway Fane encountered a heavy body lounging out. It was Stetson, furious, followed by a student officer, menacing. Something had evidently happened to ruffle the former, for he wheeled, shook his fist at his pursuer, and, never seeming to see others, burst out with this tirade:

"And that ain't half we've got to say of that —— shoulder-strapped son-of-a ——" Gulp! for he got no further. He was seized from behind, whirled about and brought face to face with Fane. For a moment no

one spoke. Alone now in his abuse, abashed and scared, the young ruffian checked in the midst of his raging harangue. This time, at least, it was not the officer's hand that was laid upon him, but the officer was the first to speak, and he spoke slowly, with a snap to every word, with a face that was white to the very lips.

“You have heard this language, gentlemen,” he said, quite calmly, “and you know to what and to whom he refers. Either he quits, or I quit, this college before another day.”

CHAPTER VI

STRANGE SHADOWS BY NIGHT

FACULTY meeting was over, and the fate of Stetson as a student was settled. It had been long and hot and trying. The talk was mainly with the President, with the usual talkers of the array, and with Beerbohm especially, but, after the testimony of the four student witnesses to the morning's affair, the vote was even overwhelmingly with Fane. Stetson was "removed from the rolls" and declared no longer a member of the college. "You may expect trouble, and lots of it, as the result of this action," said the President, and he was prophetic, though he never dreamed of the nature of the consequences to come. He went hurriedly away from the meeting without a word to Fane.

Three elders of the Faculty walked homeward with the young officer in the gathering dusk. He was silent, tired, worn. He had won, but he felt no sense of exultation. The battle was only just begun. They left him, and Jane, with anxious eyes, met him at the gate. He passed his arm around her waist and drew her to his side as they turned into the house. "Mamma," said she, "has a headache and is lying down. Clare is out walking with her Honeyman." Jane adored Thackeray and couldn't abide the rector. "Now tell me how it went."

"It went—hard," he said, "but, it *went*! The fellow is dismissed, but the President says his people will appeal to the Trustees, who are mainly politicians, who will undo what we have done and leave us worse off than we were. I fancy he knows them. Now, if Colonel West were only here!"

If Colonel West were only here! Jane was reddening faintly at the thought. If Colonel West were only here—and knew all that had transpired, knew of her going again to the matron and spying—yes, spying on Miss Hoyt, what would Colonel West be apt to think—whatever he might *not* say! Conscience was troubling Jane—conscience and other matters. The brother was not the only one of the dear name they bore to have his college troubles. That spiteful paper had been seen by bright and eager eyes at the Hall, and there had been more than one spiteful little scratch inflicted during the day, spiteful in spite of the simulated sympathy. But what would Roland think and say and do if he knew she had gone to the matron that second time and peered over the matron's shoulder at the matron's list. Jane had very virtuous intentions as regarded Ethel Hoyt and meant not to misjudge her in any way, but, the girl who won her Bayard brother, her hero, her medal-of-honor soldier, must be a paragon in petticoats, and Jane had something of Punch's famous Scotchwoman's faith in the frailty of all woman-kind—except herself.

She knew he wished to be alone, but she decided it were

best he should open his heart—and to her. “Come, let us walk it off, Ronald,” she said. “We will trot down to the post before tea. It will do you good, and I—need it.”

There was a dispatch on the mantelshelf in Mrs. Jamieson’s little parlor. She ran and fetched it, and her hat, and watched him narrowly as he opened and read.

“My luck,” he said wearily, as he crumpled the paper. “The Hazletts were coming this way. They’ve gone straight on to Chicago as no answer came to their letter, so I’ll wire from town and explain.”

Together they started. The late November evening was chill; the lanes were dark; the street lamps, just being lighted, threw but a feeble gleam across the broader avenue, and a wind from nowhere in particular was sighing through the branches overhead and sifting the brown leaves down across their pathway. It was a Friday evening, too; ill-omened day in many a history and destined so to be in theirs. They walked for a while swiftly, but in silence. He said he would rather not talk just now. They passed at intervals little knots of students and townspeople hurrying supperwards, silent almost as were they themselves. They met Clare and her clerical cavalier, who impressively lifted his hat and trusted their spirits were brighter than the day, to which neither could make fitting response. They went on presently, after a perfunctory word. “I’ve asked Mr. Tremaine to tea with us,” Clare called over her shoulder, “so don’t be late.”

"This evening of all others," moaned Jane, as she took her brother's arm and snuggled to his side; then, as they encountered other couples—"co-eds" out for a "spoon" and a stroll—suddenly dropped it and ran round behind him to the other side. "How thoughtless of me," she added. "I should be here to keep people from brushing against you," and lightly she laid her hand upon the injured limb, still supported in its fastened sleeve. It had so happened that once or twice he had been jostled, and the instant pang that followed made him sick and faint. They passed a few members of the Faculty, some going townward for exercise, some merely crossing their path. Professor Beerbohm, moving slowly, in earnest talk with a stranger, did not see them. Something in the walk and carriage of that stranger was strangely familiar to Fane, but the nearest lamp post was forty yards away, the light was dim, and the two men turned into a cross street leading to the President's almost as brother and sister overtook them. The stranger was then gesticulating, but the wind and the swirling, flitting leaves drowned all sound of his voice. Yet Fane shortened step and looked after them down the cross street, and Jane asked why. He didn't know. He thought it looked like somebody he knew.

"Stetson?" she asked instantly.

"Stetson," he answered slowly. "Stetson, the elder; but—what should Professor Beerbohm be doing with Stetson?"

They found nothing at the post. They went on to the Western Union office, where he wrote a message to Hazlett, Palmer House, Chicago; and, as they came forth, the clock in the city hall struck six. The streets were rather dull for that usually lively hour. Few people at the moment were abroad. Many of those they passed gazed curiously at them, but there was nothing new in that. The uniform seemed always to attract attention, and this evening, contrary to his usual custom, Fane had not changed it for civilian dress before coming into town. They passed the brilliantly lighted counting room of the *Evening Star*, and newsboys were running out with fresh supplies, their voices shrilling on the gusty air. They passed another brightly lighted portal, as they turned again into College Avenue,—a popular resort and bar whose swinging doors parted violently at the instant, and three or four loud-voiced citizens burst forth. Prominent among them, loudest in voice, dress and manner, flushed in face and brandishing a crushed copy of the paper in his fist, was Stetson—Stetson, the senior, whom they believed they had seen half a mile up the avenue not half an hour ago. It was possible, of course, for him to have followed closely after them and got there before now, but they remembered hearing the same voices when, ten minutes earlier, they walked briskly by the same portals. Stetson gave no sign of being drunk when he walked with Beerbohm. He gave many a sign of it as he lurched forth now. He was shouting and they heard:

“I stand by what my boy called him, by God! I say he’s a —, — white-livered sneak and coward, an’ I’ll hound him for this till he——” But here some one of the party had sense enough to clap a broad palm over the gaping mouth and to point with the other hand to the pair moving swiftly by, the girl hanging tight to the young officer’s sleeve. “Shut up, you fool!” they heard someone mutter, the words audible over the sound of shuffling feet. Fane would have turned again, but his sister clung to him and pleaded. So, silently they went on.

“We’ll be late as it is,” she murmured presently, still snuggling to his side. “We ought to hurry.” But hurry homeward he would not. The idea of sitting at tea now, with the buzz of cheery student talk from the adjoining room, the presence of the man of peace and Godliness, when his soul was filled with rage for battle, was simply unbearable. She saw it, and led him on and on, up the avenue to the very foot of the stubborn hill, and he was for breasting that, but she glanced at the brilliant lights at Clifton Hall, and turned him westward into the grove, and so on over to the plashing lake and round by Cedar Point, and finally, back by the winding pathway through the trees, toward the avenue again, where the gas lamps gleamed mistily and threw a feeble glow at intervals upon the broad walk, and there, just as they stepped forth upon the planking, which creaked and grumbled under their springy tread,—just within the fringing line of elms beyond the next lamp post and at the outer edge of the little

circle of light,—there stood two shadowy forms, those of a man and a woman. As the soldier came within the circle the flame of the jet shone full on the gold-crossed sabres and the cord of the natty *kepi*, and glistened on button and shoulder-strap. Partially, too, it blinded the eyes beneath that stiff leather visor, so that only faintly could they follow what instantly happened.

All in that instant the shadowy head of the man was uplifted, then with sudden rush and scurry the form darted from sight among the trees. Another instant and brother and sister had passed the lamp post and were within plain view of the white, startled, yet lovely face that turned in distress and terror upon them—the face of Ethel Hoyt.

Fane's hand went up to his cap. Impatiently he shook off the restraining touch: impulsively he stepped forward, never heeding, never hearing, possibly, his sister's half imploring murmur, "Oh, Ronald! Don't—don't speak! Come with me!" He had but one thought, one idea—Stetson's mad threat had been put into execution. Stetson, or someone for Stetson, had dared to accost, to insult her, and seeing him coming had suddenly fled. "What was it?—Who was it, Miss Ethel?" he cried, as he sprang to her side. "Which way did he go? Tell me, quick!" and his eyes blazed furiously as he glared about him. But her answer confused, confounded, amazed him.

"Oh, no! No! It isn't—it wasn't—— Indeed he meant—he *did* no harm! Oh, pray, don't think of it.

Good-night, Mr. Fane—Miss Fane.” And before he could regain his scattered senses she was hurrying far up the walk toward the lights of the Hall. Fane would have turned and followed, but his sister held fast. “Come with me,” she pleaded, “and I’ll—I’ll *have* to tell you!”

And going with her, he listened, stunned and silent, to the sister’s story. It was no uncouth ruffian, then. It was some unknown admirer, some unsuspected lover. And they had met at later hours! They had met before! And he and she, or both, were ashamed, else why should the man take to his heels?

Roland Fane did not go to tea that evening, as was well remembered with the following day. Jane herself was very late, and explained that Ronald had some business to attend to. Tremaine tore himself away for vestry meeting at eight, and about nine Ronald came in, went to his mother’s room, and presently to his own, whither Jane had smuggled a tempting little luncheon for him, and whither she, too, followed, saying, “I’ll have some tea for you in two minutes.” She found him looking curiously at a letter that lay conspicuously on his desk. “That was brought to the house by a messenger about eight,” she said. “Is it—anything of importance?”

He had not yet read. He was dazed, sore hurt and troubled, and she had done it. She, the sister who so devotedly loved him, had taught him distrust, even dishonor, of the girl who must have held foremost place in his heart, and how could her Ronald have given such a

love to one unworthy! Conscience was smiting her now. Like many another woman, she had been all impulse to make him see with her eyes the woman he loved, until at last he saw. Then, appalled at the result, she began to conjure up explanation—extenuation—she would not heed before; to look for some way—some reason—to undo what she had done. Self-tormented, she fled from his now doubly sorrowing face. Even the light of battle-longing had gone from it. There was nothing left but suffering. She needed to collect her thoughts and was almost glad to find the kitchen fire so low it took her long ten minutes to brew the tea she was to have had ready in two.

His room was dark and he was gone when once again she entered, struck a match and lit the gas. The luncheon stood there on the table, still untouched. Vaguely troubled, she sat down the tea things and in doing so displaced a half-folded half sheet that fell to the floor. It lay open as she stooped and the words were few, but plain and significant:

Look out for your guns to-night. If you don't believe, come through the west grove at ten o'clock and see for yourself.

(Signed) LOYAL.

"Look out for the guns!" she repeated. That might mean either the rifles in the gun racks within, or the two field pieces on the bluff without, the gymnasium. Tradition had it that once before these had been dumped into

the lake. "Come through the west grove." Naturally, if the object was to surprise the malefactors at their work and catch them red-handed. Naturally, for on the chance of interruption they would have pickets on the main traveled paths, but would hardly expect anyone from that other direction of a dark night. Evidently Ronald had gone at once,—that was to be expected—gone alone, probably, for whom had he to summon to his aid? Hurriedly she returned to her own room, which by day, at least, commanded a better view; raised the window; threw open the shutters, and then, kneeling, looked out upon the night. The scud was driving across the sky. The waning moon was still low in the east and obscured by cloud. Only three or four stars were struggling for a peep through the driving veil. The wind was moaning low among the shrubbery and tossing unseen branches overhead. In one continuous plaint and plash the long waves rolled aslant upon the pebbly shore. Far across the troubled waters a locomotive headlight rounded a rocky point and threw its brilliant beam athwart the white-capped surface. It was the night express of the Central, inward bound. Then it must be later than she thought. Even in the parlor below, where often the students kept the piano jangling by the hour, there was silence and desolation. Everybody was away now at this moment when the brave-hearted, army-bred girl seemed most to need support and sympathy. The very night wind, blowing from the sturdy cedars at the Point, seemed to whisper of foreboding, of impending

danger, and Jane could stand it no longer. "God guard my boy!" she almost wailed, wringing her supple hands. Then suddenly she sprang to her feet.

Borne on the rising, moaning gale; borne from the very heart of the westward grove beyond the gymnasium, there came to her ears, sharp and spiteful, the sound of a single shot. That was all. That was more than enough. Again she hurried down to Ronald's room, to the pine wardrobe against the northward wall, and threw it open. The belt that always hung on the rearmost peg,—the belt that bore his holstered pistol, hung there still. He at least had gone unarmed. The soldier had observed the civil law, possibly to his own peril, for peril there certainly was.

And then, slow and solemn, booming on the night, the big bell in the central tower up the hill began the stroke of ten.

CHAPTER VII

THE SHOT FROM THE CEDARS

I DON'T know anything about that," the President was saying an hour later, a very exciting hour as it chanced to be, and the President was both disturbed and vexed. "A pistol is not a proper part of a teacher's equipment, and no man is warranted in using one except, possibly, in defense of his life——"

"And must he wait till he's dead to find out whether his life's in danger?" drawled the President's other *bête noir*, the Professor of Electrics. "If I had been in the captain's place I think I would have shot sooner."

"You couldn't have shot at all," said the President scathingly. "You don't carry a pistol,—don't know how to use one. He does, it seems, and he shouldn't."

"No. I admit that according to academic tradition and the laws of the land he should have suffered himself to be pounded into pulp,—a one-armed man, alone and helpless,—but I'm bound to say, Mr. President, that you seem infinitely more concerned about the possible shooting of a student than the actual and brutal and preconcerted assault upon one of the Faculty."

Four of the six men present gasped audibly at the effrontery of the electrical department. Never before the

coming of Fane, "the disturbing element," into the charmed circle of college life, had such a thing been heard of among the Faculty. Since that coming not only Fane but certain followers had more than once measured lances with the President, "Electrics" among them; but never before had "Electrics" said his say with such shocking force and abruptness. The night air that had been so chill and depressing seemed now surcharged with surplus voltage. The President stood glaring at his former subordinate, his mouth wide open as his eyes.

"You speak strongly," said he at length.

"I feel strongly," said Sharpe in reply. "I was one of the first to reach the spot. I heard that shot from the laboratory—heard the rush through the grove. Then there were shrieks for help. I saw the watchman's lantern go diving among the trees, and I got there as quick as I could. My father, Mr. President, came home in '65 wearing that uniform, with *his* arm in a sling. I had learned to honor it, and here I saw it covered with blood and dirt—and a crippled soldier beaten senseless."

"The beating wasn't so one-sided," responded the President, feeling that Sharpe was gaining ground. "Young Stetson's brought home with a broken nose that we'll have to pay for. Your helpless victim seems to have been a hard hitter—probably it was his pistol butt that did it."

"I wish I could think so," was the uncompromising answer. "Of all the cowardly, blackguardly things I

ever heard of, this is about the worst. His sister showed me the letter by which they lured him, telling him to look out for his guns. Dr. Raynor says they must have stamped on his face when they had him down, and the wound in the shoulder, of course, is reopened. The doctor was working at that when I came away. It's my belief those brutes beat him down from behind—his cap shows it—probably knocked him senseless."

"Senseless, and yet able to shoot and scream for help!" interjected the President satirically.

"I—didn't say that," said Sharpe, reddening. "There were screams for help, but—not his."

"Whose, then?" demanded the gaunt scholar suspiciously. "You spoke of him as alone—helpless. Did his assailants scream for help?"

"I said he was alone when attacked. He was not alone when I got there."

"Who *were* there?" was the sharp demand.

"Several people," answered Sharpe slowly. "Duggan, the watchman, Post and Linkman from the observatory, and several others, strangers or students, I don't know which. I was busy with him."

"But none of those you name could have been there to scream. You said *shriek*, at first. Did you see no one else? Professor Sharpe, I will ask you a direct question that you may answer or not as you see fit. Was Miss Hoyt there?"

The silence in the old library for a second or two was

broken only by the ticking of the big Dutch clock. Then Sharpe replied:

“Miss Hoyt *was* there.”

“And can you reasonably account for Miss Hoyt’s being in the west grove at that hour of the night?”

“I cannot. It is not my business. I do not permit myself, however, to doubt that *she* can. It was barely ten. Clifton Hall is close at hand. She is not confined to it that I know of.”

But the President signified that the impromptu council was ended. Sharpe wished to stay and speak further, but the President would not so have it. He had other matters to attend to at once. A new theory had presented itself to his mind, based on rumors that had reached his ears. From more sources than one had he heard of Miss Hoyt’s recent evening wanderings, and of that early morning meeting, the occasion of Fane’s first unlawful “laying on of hands.” He lost sight of other theories in presence of this new and forceful one. He forgot what Sharpe told him of the luring letter—the threat as to the guns. He sat thinking of stories of anonymous notes that had been coming from mysterious sources. He was contemplating with dismay the certainty that here was a new scandal, a new sensation the Press would surely discover, and again the college would become the butt of every paper opposed politically to the powers in office. It was pitiful. It was exasperating. Only yesterday, he reasoned, they had most inopportunately dismissed young

Stetson and intensified the rage against them in Stetson, senior's, breast. Stetson, who "steered" ward caucuses and State conventions; Stetson, worse luck, who practically owned the *Evening Star*; Stetson, whose hopeful son was lying this moment at his father's house, with shattered nerve—and nose; Stetson, who had sworn vengeance against the college in many a saloon that night and was supposed to be somewhere in ambush at this moment—doubtless maturing plans for college annihilation. At least he had not come home, and it was nearly twelve.

Lights were burning late in a dozen rooms about the college buildings that eventful night. Sharpe could see them as he hurried away. He at first had thought to overtake his recent associates in council and make them listen to that which the President refused to hear. He had met Miss Hoyt only half a dozen times, but his wife had met her often, had become her friend and frequent visitor.

Sharpe believed in the girl and was thoroughly vexed that he had had to speak of her presence at the scene of what promised now to be a tragedy. To be sure, half a dozen others had seen her, though she was led away before Fane revived—before they sought to lift him to his feet. Sharpe had not even marked her going. It really made no great difference that he had mentioned the matter. It was sure to be known. And why should it not be? Miss Hoyt was not the only occupant of Clifton Hall who occasionally spent an evening at the home

of those college folk who dwelt beyond the west grove. The broad path from the library to those scattered homesteads led along the south edge of the grove, not thirty yards from the spot where Fane was found. Of course it must have been her shrieks that scared and scattered the brutal gang—more, probably, than did the shot. Some of them, he remembered, had come leaping down the terrace back of his laboratory. He could hear them plainly, though the forms were but faintly visible. He had feared when called to the President's that some of the students, some of the few recalcitrants whom Fane had disciplined, might be connected with the affray, but the moment he learned that Stetson was home with a damaged nose he felt sure, and thanked God for it, that the ruffian crew were all probably of the shop and saloon gang, so long prominent in local rows of every kind.

He now felt sure that Fane had been led by them into ambush. He reasoned, therefore, it was no thought of meeting Miss Hoyt, either by accident or invitation, that brought him to the grove. He believed Fane had been struck from behind before he could think of drawing pistol, knocked down and trampled on. What he could not understand was how Stetson should have received so terrific a blow. What he could not determine was who dealt it.

Sharpe could hear the slamming of doors, the scurrying to and fro of nimble feet, the cackle of excited talk as he passed under the lighted windows of the various

houses and Halls on the townward side of the college, but he wished to avoid question—avoid in fact everybody until he could better control his nerves and temper. He had dared this night to beard the presidential lion in his den, and was preparing himself to take the consequences. He had gone direct to the President from Fane's bedside, and was exasperated to find the President far more concerned about Stetson's injuries than those of Fane. He should not even have been surprised. Next to his religion and his family, the college was the good doctor's dearest thought. That Fane had been assaulted on the college grounds might advertise, but would hardly injure, the institution. That Stetson had been struck down on college ground, and presumably by a college official, might injure it beyond repair.

Sharpe had begun greatly to like that young soldier, and was one of the first to swing into line as his supporter. Sharpe despised Stetson and everything that was Stetson's, and believed in fighting him tooth and nail. Students had told him earlier in the evening of Stetson's blusterings in town, and already he was looking for clues that should connect the elder man, as well as the son, with this felonious and aggravated assault. From a distance now he could see the lights of the Stetson house, and the coming and going of Stetson "heelers." He was just considering whether or no he might venture thither with a view of learning something of Stetson, senior's, movements, when from the other side of the avenue he heard

the swift thud of hoofs and, turning, saw the side lights of Dr. Raynor's buggy. He sprang into the road and stopped it.

"How is he now?" he asked.

"Better, but——" The good doctor shook his head. "That was a brutal piece of business. He wants to talk with you, but I have persuaded him to try sleep. To-morrow, perhaps. Look here, Sharpe, who—how many were with him when you got there?"

"Why, old Duggan, or we couldn't have seen, and our two Ajaxes—Post and Linkman, from the observatory, they came running at the same moment. Then, I suppose you know, Miss Hoyt—the new French teacher—was passing about the time it happened. It was her screams that called us. She was kneeling by him and lifting his head, and someone was helping her."

"Student?"

"I don't know—at least I didn't notice."

"One of those who helped to bring him home?"

"Think not. If I remember, he helped Miss Hoyt to her feet and I didn't happen to see him again. He seemed to know her very well," and Sharpe spoke with reluctance even though he knew the worth of his man. He remembered how Miss Fane's anxious face had darkened when he told her of Miss Hoyt's presence and part in the affair—how she had asked if anybody was with Miss Hoyt.

Dr. Raynor nodded gravely. "She asked her brother

some such question and it seemed to irritate him. Have you any clue yet as to the perpetrators?"

"Clue! I should say so! Young Stetson's home with a broken nose, so the President says, and you can see there's a lively bobbery down there. The old man is yet to be heard from——"

"The old man is, or was, being driven about in a hack to sober him off. They went out the Cedar Point road about 9:30—two friends with him, one of them enough like him in bulk and build to be his twin brother. D'you know, when you were telling me of the affair I thought of them at once, but you had some reason to suspect students."

"I *had*, but that's gone, now that we have young Stetson knocked out. Of course, though, he'll swear and get others to swear he wasn't anywhere near the west grove. Did Fane recognize nobody?"

"He says he didn't see a soul. He was looking for nobody until he got close to the gym, and all on a sudden that blow came that dazed him—a club from behind that felled him on his face. Then everything was a blank until he heard your voice."

"Well, doesn't he remember firing?"

"Firing! What had he to fire? He never took his pistol. It's there now, every chamber loaded."

"Well, that's great! The President had it just the other way. However, *somebody* fired, and somebody made the President believe it was Fane. In fact,

he's more worked up about that than he is about the assault."

Then both ceased talking, for two men came rapidly along the board walk from the direction of the Stetson's. They would have gone on by but the doctor hailed them. Everybody knew Raynor; he was the friend of all classes and conditions of men, and the two halted, though perhaps unwilling.

"That you, Higgins?" asked the doctor. "How's young Stetson?"

"Pretty bad," was the slow answer. "Somebody struck that young feller a croo'l blow, an' he just out lookin' for the old man, who was on a rampage."

"Old man back?" The doctor ignored other issues.

"Back—an' ragin'. Says he'll have the law on the college for doin' up his boy when he was doin' his best to rescue the captain. I tell you them students are a tough lot."

"Students—was it?" affably inquired the doctor.

"Students sure!" said the citizen. "Didn't he *see* 'em in the woods near the Point? Who else would be for batin' the captain?"

Verily the President had reason to dread the issue—and the *Evening Star*.

CHAPTER VIII

A RUMBLE OF THUNDER

FANE was up with the fifth day, much against the physician's advice; but the tremendous stories afloat had reached his eyes and ears, especially that of the *Star*. Young Stetson could not be heard as yet, but the father had no such limitations. It may be safely asserted that, outside of college circles, nine-tenths of the community were ready to believe the Stetson story as told by that paper, to-wit: that, smarting under the injustice done him by the Faculty, the young fellow had been looking everywhere for his father in hopes of getting him to go to the President for a final appeal. Contrary to his usual habit and having guests to entertain, Mr. Stetson had decided on taking them for a late fish dinner at Cedar Point, and young Stetson, hearing of this, had later started to walk thither, taking the short cut through the college grounds. When nearing the west grove in the darkness he caught sight of Captain Fane passing underneath the lamp post at Fullan gate and entering the grove from the south. The next moment he heard furious blows, a stifled cry for help and a shot and, "knowing the hatred in which Fane was held by many students," instantly divined the cause, rushed to

the rescue and, even while striving to defend the prostrate form, was felled by a savage blow with some heavy bludgeon that blinded him and broke his nose. In doing good for evil he had nobly suffered martyrdom, declared the elder Stetson, and it was now the college's turn and opportunity to do right by at once re-instating the boy. If it didn't, Stetson and the law would be heard from.

Miss Hoyt had not left her room since the night of the occurrence—indeed had hardly left her bed, and the matron and physician of the Hall declared her too much shaken to submit to interrogations such as the President desired.

The story she told at the time was that, feeling ill and nervous, she had gone out for air, and was suddenly shocked by the sound of blows and struggles close at hand in the grove. Then came a shot, whereat in fright she screamed for help. Some dark forms rushed away, and then, hearing moans, she followed the sound and there lay Captain Fane. Duggan came almost instantly thereafter, and others, and finally she was led away. Yes, in answer to the matron's question, asked three days later, she certainly saw dimly one form, that of young Stetson, slowly and painfully finding his feet and holding his hands to his face. Then many came running, and he disappeared.

Fane, interrogated by the President as to why he had gone armed and what had happened, replied that he had not gone armed—whereat the President looked dazed,

and later doubtful—and that there would have been no opportunity to use arms even had he carried a pistol. He was struck down suddenly from behind, and actually knew nothing more. The anonymous note was shown to the doctor; he read, and stowed it in his pocket. It seemed to him unseemly that, then, both Captain and Miss Fane declined to part with it even to him.

“You criticise me for going armed when, more than any man in this community, was I unarmed,” said Fane unflinchingly, “and now I decline to part with proofs that may be needed to repel other accusations.” Verily, between Fane and Sharpe the good doctor was gaining new and undesired views on the doctrine he so long had preached—that of individual responsibility and independence of action. Like Thomas Jefferson, Sir Joseph Porter, K. C. B., and other expounders on social equality, Dr. Parsons was amazed when it reacted upon himself and his assumed prerogative.

But it was now becoming evident to those who knew Fane that he was far more perturbed in spirit than injured in the flesh. In falling his left arm had doubled under him and escaped further damage. The blow at the back of the head had been severe and stunning and the brutal trampling or ~~kicking~~ that followed had badly bruised and disfigured his face. One hack on the right cheek would probably leave a scar as permanent as the Apache mark along the forehead. But his wrath over

the affair was far too deep for words. It was something of which, apparently, he could not bear to speak, and declined to speak, even when the President himself appeared a second time, asking to be shown to the patient's room, where, it seems, he had wasted little time in expressions of regret or sympathy, but quite a number of words in questions which failed to elicit the desired answer. Fane shut his jaws like a steel trap, and his eyes had a look the President afterwards spoke of as furious, when it became obvious that the object was to draw admission that Fane had knowledge of certain after-dark movements of a certain resident of Clifton Hall. The President left without the information he desired, and with additional and somewhat alarming insight into the character of this intractable, if not insubordinate, subordinate.

When Fane reappeared to his few friends of the Faculty he was all cordiality and gratitude to Sharpe and Lorimer. He was icy to Beerbohm, and he wouldn't go near the President. They thought, many of them, that now he would surely resign and quit. Indeed, it was understood that the Executive Committee stood ready to act at once, but Sharpe laughed loud at the idea.

"So far from resigning," said he, "you'll find that young man sticking tighter than wax to his work. If the Trustees are asked to decide anything, it will be what salary to give him. Listen to *that!*"

"That," as it turned out, was a sudden and tumultuous outburst of cheers from the gymnasium, where the reappearance of the commandant had led to a scene, as Kipling would put it, "totally unprovided for in the regulations,"—a burst of cheers from the battalion, reinforced by over a hundred young men of the undergraduate body, who had been holding a students' meeting to express their sentiments regarding the articles appearing in the press. That meeting, called by the students themselves in accordance with the custom of the college, led to new and unlooked-for developments. It had been addressed by the President, who counseled moderation; said much about their duty to the State and to the college, more about the evil influences of the saloon, and still more about the unseemly spirit of combativeness, the lust for battle, the rage for revenge, that he feared would influence their councils instead of that broad and Christianlike attitude toward their fellow men that should characterize the deliberations of the youth of these enlightened days. He received his meed of applause—they always applauded, and most of them honored, their President. Then, with his coat tails streaming in the wind and his felt hat crammed down and held on the back of his head, he strode away across the campus to another meeting, a meeting of the professors, called by himself to consider certain changes in the regulations applying to Clifton Hall—changes, as he said, "suggested by recent events," and he, too, heard and was

arrested by the sudden outburst of cheers. He looked back in mild astonishment.

"It's for the captain," explained old Duggan, with a Celtic grin. "He's a good-plucked one, an' it 'll be a sorry day for them town blackguards when he gets out and after 'em."

The President sighed and passed within. Could he never teach these fiery young spirits that when one cheek had been sore smitten, the other also, in meekness and resignation, should be turned?

Apparently not. Fane had heard of the proposed action at the gymnasium; had his own reasons for desiring to stay it and, all unannounced and unlooked for, appeared in the midst of a stirring impromptu from the lips of a speechmaking senior who would "hurl back into the teeth of the *Evening Star* the false and defamatory allegations at the expense of the student body." He challenged proof; he courted investigation; he demanded apology, retraction, and, unlimbering a set of fulminating resolutions, had begun to read them, when his voice was drowned in a torrent of cheers. The next thing he knew Fane himself had been chaired to the firewood box that was the improvised rostrum, and, presently, in response to tumultuous demand, Fane's voice, less ringing than they had ever heard it, yet powerful for good, was uplifted in a brief speech long remembered in the legends and traditions of the State "Co-Educational."

"I want to thank you first for this most unlooked-for

welcome and greeting. It is something new to me—something I shall not soon forget. You have spoken for me, drilled for me, and, as I have learned, some of you have stood up and fought for me. Now I am going to ask you to go still further, to do something for me that in your loyalty and friendliness you haven't done yet. I ask you to be silent for me.

“No wonder you look surprised. I heard the latter part of the last speaker's address, and I am grateful for every word said for the battalion, for the student body and for myself. I heard the resolutions. They are indeed stirring. They are *too* stirring. You know, and I know, that no student of this college had any part in the assault of that Friday night. [Cheers.] You know and I know one at least of the participants. [“You bet we do.”] But you do not know what I *do* know, that there is something more to this matter than as yet appears. The action you propose would have the effect of warning men I most need to reach. I ask you to help me, and the more you stir things the less you will help. Be patient, therefore, and—be silent. Leave this matter to me, and bear this in mind: If I do not settle it once and for all within a month I'll leave the field to you. This you may count on: I shall ask no aid from the college in nailing the man, or settling with him when I find him.”

In garbled and exaggerated form, of course, the words went to the press, but the resolutions did not. It was

held by the *Star* that, in so speaking, Captain Fane distinctly threatened some person or persons hitherto unsuspected, and it was believed that "one of our most respected citizens" was aimed at. Now, Stetson, senior, had unaccountably left town. By a night train he had gone, it was said, to Chicago. An uproarious demonstration on the part of the students, consequent upon the *Star's* renewal of its attack upon Fane, and its assertion that the students themselves were his real assailants, may have had something to do with this exodus. The son and heir, still under guard of the family physician, had not yet, by daytime, at least, left the house. But Fane's appeal to the student body had had double effect. Demonstrations ceased. Drills were resumed, and ten names hitherto reported excused by the President were, at the request of the excused, added to the battalion rolls.

Then followed a five days' lull in the fight, and then came a stranger and even more mysterious move. Professor Beerbohm, closing up after the final recitation of the day, was notified that the President desired to see him at the office at once, and at that office already sat Professors Sharpe and Lorimer, in company with a stranger. The President seldom introduced people. He said it was a waste of time: people who desired to know other people waited for no such intermediary. He went, as was his wont, straight to business.

"Did you bring anybody to see me Friday evening a week ago?"

Beerbohm reflected, began to color and finally said: "No, sir."

"You came in about tea time, as I remember; didn't you?"

"I did, yes, sir, but I brought nobody."

The good doctor turned to his fellows of the Faculty.

"The captain must have been mistaken," said he.

"Not entirely," said Professor Sharpe. "Pardon me if I ask Professor Beerbohm a question. Was it not that evening you went through from College Avenue to the President, walking with a stranger, in a dark sack suit?"

"Yes," said Beerbohm, warily and uneasily. "But he was merely asking the way and I was showing him."

"To Mr. Stetson's house, was it not?" persisted Sharpe.

"To—Mr. Stetson's," answered Beerbohm, flushing, with ill-concealed annoyance.

"Would you mind telling this—this gentleman what name he gave and what happened?" And Sharpe indicated the silent stranger.

"He gave no name that I now remember. He appeared interested in college matters and talked entertainingly until we parted in front of the President's. I never met him before."

"But you met him—after, I believe?" hazarded the stranger very civilly.

Beerbohm hesitated: "Not—since that night," was, however, his answer.

"True—not since that night; but once again that night, did you not?"

It was now time for the professor to manifest righteous resentment. What could this close examination portend? He had seen the stranger again that night, and he did not at all wish to say how and when and why. "I protest," said he, "against this inquisition until I know what it means."

"It means, professor," said the stranger, "that a man closely resembling Mr. Stetson in several ways was with you at Mr. Stetson's house that night—went out, in fact, with Mr. Stetson, and now is very much needed to put a quietus on damaging stories afloat. You say he did not give his name, but, did nobody give it for him?"

"Mr. President," said Beerbohm excitedly, appealingly, "I have had annoyance and trouble enough growing out of the—the complications that have arisen here since—since Mr. Fane's advent, and now I object to being catechized by a stranger. If *you* have any questions to ask I will answer them."

Now it was characteristic of the President that when, "for the good of the college," as he said, he believed it possible to influence an influential man, he would not hesitate to call upon him and seek to advise or dictate, even when he and that man had been at loggerheads for months. But, while he could see nothing objectionable

in *his* calling upon even objectionable persons, he strongly objected to such a course on part of any other man connected with the college. There could be nothing suspicious in his going, for instance, to see Mr. Stetson. There could be nothing, however, that was not suspicious in Professor Beerbohm's doing so. When trustees or politicians were to be enlightened as to college matters, Dr. Parsons decreed that it was his light that should so shine as to color the subject in accordance with his presidential views. Only when he so directed, therefore, did he desire his subordinates to call upon these notoriously disreputable but admittedly influential people. Yet here it looked as though, without a word to him on the subject, Professor Beerbohm had gone direct from the presidential presence to the home of the objectionable Stetson—Stetson who on that very evening had been heard of as drunk and denunciatory among the downtown saloons. The President himself had begun to bristle at the tone and trend of the stranger's questions. Now, in tone much less courteous than the latter's, and in manner both suspicious and irritated, Parsons sent in his own query:

"Then you rejoined this man at Stetson's after leaving my house?"

"I—did, sir. It was a matter of charity and courtesy. He had come to see Mr. Stetson on important business, he said, and I had heard—had reason to believe—Mr. Stetson was not at home and probably would not be at

home. As a matter of fact, however, he did come, in a carriage, while I was there, and later they drove away together."

"You knew of Stetson's not being at home. Why did you not tell him so before?"

"That—possibly was an afterthought, Mr. President."

"H'm! and how long were you there, and what kept you after Stetson's home coming?—more charity?" demanded Parsons austerely.

"Partially, at least," was the nettled answer, "for he needed looking after, and if I made myself useful under the circumstances, I did no more than our President has frequently preached——"

"I don't know anything about that!" broke in the good doctor irascibly. "What I object to is having members of our faculty at any time seeking the influence of the saloon element. Especially is it to be deprecated at the present time."

It must be owned that the conference was becoming livelier than its promoters, Professors Sharpe and Lorimer, had expected or intended. The look of whimsical enjoyment was fast flitting from the eyes of the former, while Lorimer sat silent and embarrassed. By him sat the stranger, observant, but in no wise obtrusive. The President's questions were saving him just so much trouble. A hot rejoinder from the lips of the much badgered Beerbohm was stopped by the entrance of the

janitor, hat in hand. "The captain is not home, sir," said he, and laid a note on the table. The President briefly glanced through it; then looked up, quickly, relief in his eyes.

"The man we most want," said he, "can't be back before to-morrow evening. Captain Fane is in Chicago. This meeting is adjourned. Professor Beerbohm will remain. I wish to speak with him."

"If that be the case," said Beerbohm on the instant,

"I desire that Professors Sharpe and Lorimer remain as witnesses."

The stranger arose, and bowed civilly. "With your leave, Mr. President," said he, "I shall retire in one moment; but I have two question to ask Professor Beerbohm." And without further parley he took from a flat wallet a card photograph and held it forth to the flushed and angering scientist. "That," said he, "is, I think, the gentleman you saw driving away with Stetson?"

"It is at least the picture of him," was the short reply.

"Well answered, professor. Now, one more: What suggested your writing to this gentleman 'for inside information as to Captain Fane's conduct in Arizona'?" Beerbohm's face turned suddenly livid. For an instant he could make no answer. The next, he impulsively began, "I never——" But what was the use? He saw the man knew.

"I wrote because—I considered this college entitled to

know the real character of this officer who was making so much trouble——”

“Precisely; and this man Stetson cat’s-pawed you into doing what he dared not do—making you, what’s more, almost directly responsible for what followed, or may yet follow. Good-day, gentlemen.”

CHAPTER IX

A TURN IN THE TIDE

MISS FANE was in sore disquietude. Out of all proportion with the gravity of the assault upon him was her brother's mind inflamed by recent events. For one thing, the tide of college opinion had turned surprisingly in his favor as the result of the fray, so why care for the community? For another thing, professors and professors' wives, who hitherto had seemed to hold aloof, had come in numbers to call upon them and to sympathize. They left, it must be owned, less sympathetic than they came, because poor Mrs. Fane could not forget his grievance, and received them with a majesty of mien quite at variance with the humble character of their surroundings. For still another thing, the press throughout the State had begun to take issue with the *Star*, and home letters from students finding their way into many a home paper threw a very different and far less lurid light over matters at college. The brutal force of the blow, therefore, had brought on almost as forceful reaction.

Yet her brother seemed tuned to a pitch of nervous excitement, if not irritability, Jane had never seen in him before. He could not sleep. He was up and about at all hours of the night. He would not explain. He was

“scouting a trail,” he said, and had no time to talk. He would tell her by and by. He was sending and receiving telegrams and letters, Chicago being the seat of the storm center. He had heard thrice from Hazlett, whose “wires” or letters seemed to excite him more than ever. He had thrice asked Jane if she had been to call on Miss Hoyt; if not, why not? And Jane went against her will, though she, too, had heard how her brother’s senseless head, senseless and bleeding, had been lifted in Miss Hoyt’s arms, to the ruin of Miss Hoyt’s much-admired fall walking suit. She still cherished the story of Miss Hoyt’s many masculine letters, and the memory of Miss Hoyt’s mysterious night interview with that masculine unknown. She went because Ronald kept asking, and came away civilly rebuffed: “Miss Hoyt is unable to see callers to-day,” and at that very moment, unless Miss Fane’s sharp eyes were mistaken, Mrs. Sharpe was with Miss Hoyt. Mrs. Sharpe for that matter had been with her every day, and some nights, and Mrs. Sharpe was a woman no other woman about the college ever spoke of save in respect. Jane was troubled—puzzled—wearied. She thought she had had reason to stifle Ronald’s admiration for that girl. She *had* staggered it. She could see that. But something had served to revive his keen and vehement interest. He desired to know when Miss Hoyt would receive Jane? The next thing, probably, he would be demanding that she should receive him.

Then there had come a wire, late one evening, and by

the midnight train he left for Chicago, and on the following day there called a well-dressed stranger who presented a letter in Ronald's hand, bidding her place in the hand of the stranger certain papers in a certain pigeon-hole in his desk. She obeyed, wondering. She followed the stranger with her eyes and saw him join Professor Sharpe down the street, and, somehow, was impressed with the idea that Sharpe had escorted him almost to the door, then remained in the background. The next hour brought the janitor with the request from the President that Fane come to his office at once, and Jane wrote reply to the effect that her brother was in Chicago, and reminded the President that he had said he preferred Captain Fane should not disturb him when he wished to go anywhere—that, between drills, he was free to go and come. Indeed, the President had spoken as though he wished the captain might go and—stay.

Fane would not return until the following morning, she wrote the President, and such *had* been his plan, yet he was home that very evening, late, and with him came that stranger, the quiet-mannered, well-dressed man, garbed like a civilian and bearing himself like a soldier. She could have rushed upon him with both hands when Ronald quietly presented him by name, "Captain Hazlett."

Mrs. Fane and the Lady Clare, however, monopolized much of the visitor's time, so "plain Jane" had but scant opportunity to speak with him. At ten o'clock Fane had

laughingly called "time" and carried him away to his own room. There, together, Hazlett and Ronald, they had talked earnestly a full hour. At eleven Ronald came to his sister's door; kissed her good-night, saying it might be nearly twelve before he returned; then escorted his friend and comrade to the railway station and saw him off for Chicago. She looked and saw the light in his window in the wing as late as 12:30, and longed to go down to him, for she, too, was sleepless, but she knew it would only worry him now. She read awhile and looked again and the light was still there. Then she must have dozed a little while, for again the big bell struck its solemn, single note, following in her mind so close upon the other that it had the effect of a funeral toll, and with something like a shudder she found herself counting ten seconds in expectation of the coming of another stroke. Then, wide awake, once more she turned down her reading lamp; once more strolled to the window and gazed down at Ronald's.

One o'clock, and his light was still there. Moreover, she was not the only watcher of the light. Somebody else was there—somebody moving stealthily and slowly, close to the dark wall. She might not have seen the shadowy form at all, for there was no moon, the starlight was dim, and the nearest gas lamp but faintly illumined that part of the yard. The figure, however, at the very moment she gazed forth, had uplifted hand and arm. She could see them, black against the glow from within;

the hand softly tapping at the window pane; then down it dropped, and by straining her eyes she could faintly see the figure skulking back to the corner of the wing, from which point both the lighted window at the front and the door at the side could be watched, and there, crouching, it seemed to await the result of the signal.

But there was no result. The shade was not lifted. The window remained closed. The shadow at the corner stirred uneasily, and Jane watched with throbbing heart. Did this mean more mischief, or was it warning thereof? If menace or mischief, would the shadow have retreated to the corner whence no blow or missile could be delivered? Unless, indeed, and Jane was quick to think and as quick to search, confederates might be lurking a rod or two away in readiness to loose shot or stone? But, though dark, the yard was open, flat, a miniature croquet ground, affording no place for concealment. The shadow had probably come from the back of the premises, and retired the way it came. The shadow might have a pistol. It certainly carried no visible weapon. It certainly had sought to attract the attention of the occupant of that room, and no one else. It as certainly was awaiting, in obvious impatience, the result. Jane, too, waited, and presently it came again, creeping along the white-painted, dark-looming front of the wing until once again at the lighted window, and once again hand and arm went up to the pane and thrice, low, yet distinct, the sharp, vitreous sound was heard. The hand

was then again withdrawn, and the figure crouched halfway to the corner, and again waited and listened.

Jane, peering through the green shutters and counting her hurried heartbeats, still watched and waited. Could Ronald at last have fallen asleep? If not, and he was within the room, he must have heard, yet would give no sign. One minute, nearly, they waited again, the crouching, shadowy form, the watchful woman at the casement, and then a third time the shadow approached the window; paused beneath, and then two hands went up to the pane, and sharp and sudden, clear and distinct, the fingers beat upon the glazed soundingboard a signal no soldier could possibly mistake. Jane knew it instantly, and started with astonishment, for not since she left Fort Adams had it reached her ears. It was the stirring drum beat of "Adjutant's Call."

This, then, was someone to whom army calls were familiar, and such calls were far less familiar in the '70's than they are to-day. This then was probably no college student, for though they had their bugles in the little battalion, there had been as yet, since Ronald came, no battalion formation—no adjutant's call. They had not indeed a drum or drummer. Whoever it was strumming that signal on Ronald's window, he had learned it elsewhere, and not at Groveton. Now, indeed, must Ronald answer, or be deaf to it.

Another minute she waited, and no answer came. The light burned steadily, but all was silent. The call was

not repeated. The shadow presently stole slowly, reluctantly away, vanishing finally in the deeper shadows around the corner of the little wing. Jane could stand it no longer. Taking with her a little night lamp, she stole into the narrow hallway, down the stairs and through the deserted parlor and dining room to another hallway leading to the wing. She found his door unlocked, his room unoccupied, his pillow unruffled, his wardrobe open, his revolver gone. Ah, she wished he had not taken that! Whatever his errand,—his extremity,—she wished he had not taken that! There was little likelihood, she reasoned, of further violence to him. Public sentiment, that at first had been indifferent to his possible danger, had roused vehemently after the attack. It is our national characteristic. We scorn precaution for ourselves; we scoff at it for our national servants, but we wake in righteous wrath when once the brutal deed is done. We boast ourselves perennially of the approachableness of our leaders, and kick ourselves a day or two, perhaps, when at odd intervals, in open light and in the midst of his own people, a beloved President is assassinated. We blow up by scores our friends and fellow citizens through defective mines or weakened boilers. We burn up by hundreds our women and children in playhouses and pleasure boats. We grind them to fragments in excursion trains and railway tragedies. We rage a lot when the mischief is done, but achieve little more than we did before in the way of an “ounce

of prevention." We have had a half century of experiences that should have brought wisdom, but have killed off far more victims this end of the half than we did at the other.

Groveton was as certainly wondering now why Fane did *not* carry a pistol as two weeks before it would have been censuring had he carried one. But Jane was looking at it all from still another point of view, and Jane was more than troubled—troubled that at so late an hour her brother should be out at all—troubled that, being out, he should carry that revolver. The danger was no longer in her eyes that others might injure him, but that he might injure others. Knowing him as she did; knowing his quick, high temper; knowing how furiously he raged at heart over the cowardly assault upon him, the covert indignity to his uniform; knowing how deep was his sense of wrong and how keen his longing to meet his foeman face to face, she deplored his having taken that weapon with him. Had Jane begun to know that still other things had happened to stir to the uttermost his fiery nature, her anxiety would have been redoubled.

That knowledge was yet to come, and to confound her.

Slowly she turned away. There were letters and memoranda lying on the little table, some of them temptingly half open, but Jane had been brooding over that single case of spying to which she humbly pleaded guilty. Ronald had said he would tell her later what all this mystery meant, and though sore troubled and sleepless

from anxiety, she would not spy further, even to the extent of reading open pages. Perhaps if she had she might have averted more than one fateful consequence, but read she would not. Ronald could not bear it in man or woman that he or she should peep or pry into other people's affairs, and Ron was growing beyond her, away from her, the sister who so loved him. God forbid she should do aught that might ever drive him aloof from her. She would go back to her room, but she must leave a line for him. A blank "pad" lay on the desk, a pencil beside it, and she wrote:

I am so anxious, Ron, dear. Seeing your light burning so late brought me down, and there was somebody spying—signaling at your window. I *had* to come down and you were gone—your revolver, too. I'll tell you all about it in the morning. Whoever it was, he's gone and it's long after one—nearer two.

Lovingly,

J.

Was he gone? Something impelled her to stop a minute and try the little side door that opened on the yard. It was unbolted, but the lock worked clumsily, and snapped as she essayed to open—snapped and attracted the instant attention of some shadowy thing standing at the coping of the old well between the opening door and the westward sky—something that started, that came quickly, stealthily, a few steps toward her, then suddenly stopped, seemed to stare an instant, then turned and plunged through the currant bushes at the back of

the wing, and was out of sight in another second. Her little lamp, upheld, had thrown its beam upon her anxious face. It was not the face the intruder hoped and looked to see. What stranger, friend or foe, was this that haunted her brother's door long hours in the dead of night?

And still she wished that Ronald had not taken his revolver!

Wearily she went back to her room, blew out her light, softly opened her window shutters, and crouched there, looking out upon the chill and silent night. No wind was stirring. No cloud was scudding across the sky. A dense veil of vapor seemed to be drawn across the firmament, shrouding even the planets in their solemn round. The nearest street lamp threw a pallid gleam along the board walk at the front and part way across the unpaved street. Darkness brooded over all the neighborhood, even to the distant buildings on college hill. Only from two windows, far or near, was there sign of wakefulness within. Twenty minutes earlier there was only one. First was this bright one close at hand from Ronald's bedroom in the wing. Second was that dim one over to the westward, across the faintly plashing waters, somewhere among the tawdry buildings on the Island, the now supposedly deserted pleasure resort much affected in the summertime and early autumn by Stetson and his cronies. Once or twice of late had Jane noticed a night light at "the Roost," as

some of the students derisively called it, but when she spoke of it, Mrs. Jamieson, who happened to hear, was prompt to say she had probably seen some locomotive headlight much farther beyond. There was no one on the Island now but an old German care-taker and his wife. The resort, such as it was, had closed for the season long weeks before. These Germans, said Mrs. Jamieson, were never astir after dark, and often asleep in the daytime.

Then who was astir over there to-night? It was close to the hour of two. Jane expected every moment to hear the deep boom of the college bell, yet, late as it was, somebody must be moving about among those distant and deserted buildings. There was a sort of pavilion and dancing platform, roofed above but open at the sides. There was a bowling alley with a wooden observation tower. There was a main building in which were the bar and billiard room, living rooms, kitchen and card rooms, for rumor had it that gambling was rife there in the height of the season. There was a little boathouse with a wooden landing pier down at the townward side, and now at 2 a. m.,—for “the Senator,” as the students called the bell, spoke at the instant—a light as of a lantern was dancing from the building at the summit down to the landing at the shore, while the light near the summit still burned, dim yet steady.

Jane took from its case a binocular field glass that had been her father's in the war days, and focused it on

the summit light. It seemed to be that of a kerosene lamp in the bar or office. Then she sought that other, the dancing light, and presently found it—stirring about a moment among the rocks at the little landing. Then it seemed to drop into a boat or something of the kind and at once popped out of sight. Three minutes more and a shade seemed drawn across the other, the one at the Roost, for it first dimmed, then disappeared, and all at the island was darkness.

Searching the surface with her glasses Jane presently decided that, though faint and feeble, some kind of a misty, will-o'-the-wisp gleam was sailing slowly across the water, coming steadily in shore near that rocky point where Ronald had had his first local meeting with that girl at the Hall. How Jane wished Ronald had never met her at all! Jane was not slow to reach the conclusion that a little rowboat was ferrying somebody from the island to the mainland, and the lantern was hidden in the stern sheets. In four minutes it had passed behind the curtain of a neighboring fringe of trees, and Jane saw it no more. Now they might be landing at the Point. Now they might be stealthily parting for the night. Now, perhaps Ronald would be coming home. What could *he* have been doing at the Island?

Fifteen minutes was not long to wait, now that she had been waiting so much longer. Fifteen minutes might bring him; twenty minutes did. She saw no form. She heard no sound, but somebody coming up

from the lakeside must have silently entered the door of the wing, for, all on a sudden, the light in Ronald's room was turned low. Then the window was softly opened. The shutters were unlatched and drawn in. The room was closed for the night.

Not two minutes later a light, tiny but clear and steady, as suddenly shot into view beyond the bay, coming from the topmost of that little clump of frame buildings at the Roost, a light that glowed steadily about five seconds, was as suddenly snuffed out, and as suddenly shone again. And so, alternately, regularly, with clock-like precision, at about five-second intervals, that light for full three minutes later twinkled in and out across the wave, and Jane watched with dilating eyes, rising slowly to her feet and standing finally erect as she stared through her powerful glass. Whoever the operator, whatever the purpose, there was but one interpretation, and Jane, who time and again had seen the swinging flame of the army torch, the flare of the Navy Coston lights, read unerringly and understood. Someone at the Island was striving to attract the attention of someone on the shore. Someone in trouble was surely signaling for aid. Ronald at last was home, and Ronald should know. For the second time, late that night, she left her chamber and sped on tiptoe through the dark stairway, through the dark room and hall below, until, breathless, she reached his door. It stood wide open and a bright light shone into the little corridor, though

the window had been dark but the moment before. Timidly and in low tone she called his name, but there came no answer, and she stepped within. There stood the lamp upon the shelf, bright burning as when last she saw it, but curtain and shade were both tight closed. There stood the wardrobe, open as she had left it, but on the back of a chair in front of it was thrown a civilian sackcoat Ronald had been wearing earlier in the night. There on the table lay her scribbled lines, not where she had left them, but to one side. There on the table where she had left the note now lay Ronald's army revolver, its cylinder removed and missing, and then—a click at the latch of the little side door, a quick, light step in the passage, a sudden halt at the threshold and there, hatless, coatless, in slippered feet and gazing at her with startled eyes and with pallid face stood her brother—the missing cylinder in the powder-stained fingers of his right hand.

CHAPTER X

THE MAJOR MEETS HIS FATE

OLD DUGGAN, night watchman and deputy janitor of the "Co-Educational," had of late been having some strange experiences. Student pranks he knew of old and had often been a victim. Girlish frolics in the form of pillow fights and hair-comb serenades he had sometimes heard, but never seen. Surreptitious suppers, hoisted to upper windows from the hands of lavish classmates of the sterner sex, he had occasionally trailed, too late either to seize the supplies or the source thereof. The Co-Eds declared he was too soft-hearted to do either. Once he had broken up a "horse fiddle" party, and also the fiddle, but that was because the instrument was productive of vile and discordant noises. Duggan had never yet arrested the performers in a nocturnal *musical* where the resultant melody was sweet and harmonious. The President, indeed, had accused him of unbecoming laxity in the performance of his duty, for the President had no ear for music. The matron had reported him for aiding and abetting in smuggling contraband cookies, caramels and chocolate creams, and a Scotch verdict was the sole result. In blocking any case of malicious mischief Duggan was commendably prompt and zealous, but in deal-

ing with the student body in minor malefactions the old Irishman was imbecility itself.

When, therefore, he was called to "attend the President,"—the invariable formula in which the President's Mercury conveyed that information,—and asked if he had seen or heard anything of a midnight prowler underneath the west windows of Clifton Hall, Duggan, thinking it only another case of chocolate creams, said no, and was startled by the vehemence of the President's next remark: "Then you have been asleep or in collusion. If he appears again and you fail to apprehend him, I'll nominate your successor to the Board of Trustees."

It seems the matron was the informant or complainant. She said that not only had a man been seen two nights in succession, and just after twelve, peering up at the windows on the west side, but he had dared to attempt to attract the attention of the occupants by throwing pebbles up at the windows. What Duggan did not know was that when the matron was cross-examined as to this she amended her statement by saying "a" window. Being further questioned, the matron reluctantly said it was Miss Hoyt's window, for, in common with many others, both teachers and students, the matron had found herself more and more attracted to Miss Hoyt, and this in spite of the rumors about those letters, the night meeting with the unknown, and the episode of the west grove.

Then the President gave instructions that Miss Hoyt

should temporarily be moved to another room, and that Miss Hinton, a self-reliant amazon who had grown with the college from its infancy, should occupy Miss Hoyt's; and the matron, with some misgiving as to the result, communicated the President's wishes to those most concerned. Miss Hoyt expressed no objection. She was still, possibly, too ill in mind and body to be anything but inert. Miss Hinton, however, behaved with her accustomed spirit. She would go on watch, she said, whenever the President desired. She would sleep, however, only in the room she had been so long accustomed to consider her own. Irreverent Co-Eds were wont to refer to that as the "Lair," and sometimes, it must be owned, to the occupant herself by the same quadrilateral with its vowels reversed. The young are prone to attribute to their monitors unseemly traits, to which they themselves would doubtless plead not guilty.

Then Duggan had been called into conference. The matron was the *de jure* head of Clifton Hall, Miss Hinton, by reason of an aggressive personality and many years of service, the *de facto*. The Trustees looked to the former for the maintenance of proper discipline in Hall: the President's dependence was on the latter. The matron was affable: the maiden austere. By their exuberant flock, and in spite of her duties, the matron was beloved: the maiden, in spite of her many virtues, belittled, if not bedeviled. And here came delicious and not-to-be-neglected opportunity.

He would be an unwise man who would imagine that a bevy of bright-eyed Western girls could be blinded to the fact that there was something odd in the sudden exchange of quarters between Miss Hinton and Miss Hoyt. Once sure of the fact, they were soon as sure of the cause, and acted accordingly.

Now, the President had told Duggan to have two stout men to aid him. He had settled in his own mind on the identity of the night prowler, and was now bent on proving his point. The girls of Clifton, sympathizing naturally with the sighing lover who would come serenading under his lady's window, could not be induced to look upon the improper proceeding in the proper light. There were dozens of eager, adventurous young spirits among their chums and classmates of the battalion, and not a few even among the supposedly more staid young men of the senior and junior classes. There were hurried, merry, mischievous conferences about the halls and corridors of the college buildings. There were plots and projects unspeakable. Not one of their number would do anything to hurt old Duggan. Not one of their number could resist the temptation, however, to have fun with him, especially if in so doing they could exasperate Miss Hinton. Given these conditions, anyone who knows anything of college boys and college girls needs no enlargement on the fact that Duggan was having some novel and strange experiences. Moreover, Miss Hinton was having what our latter-day saints, college girls of this decade, would prob-

ably term the "time of her life." Never before had she known what it was to have a man coming sighing or singing under her window. Now, she had more than either she or Duggan could begin to account for. Where the President had prepared her to look for one and to mark him well, she looked upon one after another whom she couldn't mark at all,—whom Duggan and his deputies chased in vain,—who led the swearing old Celt a lively dance in the darkness, and when at last a capture was made it turned out to be a vivacious Sophomore who swore he hadn't been nearer the Hall than the avenue gate. Then sounds of half-suppressed giggling at neighboring windows admonished Miss Hinton that the girls were making game of her. Then, oh, gruesome sight! the straw-stuffed effigy of a man was lowered from a cornice of Clifton Hall just at dawn of a frosty morning and hung suspended in full view, close to the casement of "my lady's chamber,"—the Lair,—yet not so close as at that hour to attract attention from within. And the first thing Miss Hinton knew of it was when the bell was sounding for morning prayers and there was a gale of delighted whisperings and bubbling merriment in the corridors and a banging of windows, and then sympathetic, yet masculine, shouts below. Soldier students on the way to the early—the special—drill had caught sight of the supposed suicide, and their amaze was prodigious in view of the fact that half their number, perhaps, were *particeps criminis*. A knock at the door and a demure voice calling

Miss Hinton gave the first startling intimation of "A man at your window!"

That day it began to dawn on the President and Miss Hinton that what had begun in mystery was drifting into broad burlesque. Duggan and the dogs of war were called off and, barring the imprint of slender, slippered feet, and many of these, in a dusty garret about the scuttle stairs, and one find by Duggan close to the west front of Clifton Hall, nothing was developed that threw any light on the affair. Even that find Duggan kept to himself as much as twelve hours until he could see Captain Fane. It was a stone, but little bigger than a thimble, to which was attached half a yard of fine fish line, at the end of which was a tiny roll of stiff paper, which Duggan had opened. A few words were penciled on the inside:

He has been here and I've got to go. Drop every cent you can spare.

The rest was a clipping from a late Chicago paper.

ARMY OFFICER MISSING

Officials at Division Headquarters, while maintaining the utmost secrecy and professing to feel no alarm, are still unable to account for Major J. E. Piggott, who has been missing from his lodgings as much as ten days. The major came to Chicago on extended leave from Fort Colville in the far Northwest. He did not, as is customary, report his arrival at General Sheridan's Headquarters, but was recognized on the street by Police Officer Carney, a discharged soldier who had known him in

Arizona, and who gave important information when, a day or two later, it transpired that Butler & Schack, the well-known lawyers, were in search of him and had been persistent in their inquiries at Headquarters. It is learned from his landlady, an estimable widow who owns the premises No. 107 Seneca Street, North Side, that the major left suddenly and in evident haste, taking only a valise with him; that several gentlemen had called several times to see him, and that after he had been gone three days or so officers came from General Sheridan and searched his room. Fears are entertained that the major has taken his own life, as Mr. Butler, of the firm, admits that they were acting for his wife to whom the Courts had awarded and ordered paid the sum of two hundred dollars a month, and the major had long been in default.

The military authorities have taken charge of his room and belongings, and further information is refused. Enough is known, however, to warrant the assertion that, should he not have made way with himself, he must face court-martial when he comes to the surface again. Officers at Headquarters profess to know where he went from here, scoff at the theory of suicide and say that he will turn up again in the near future. Meantime developments are awaited with interest.

This clipping did honest Duggan lay, with the sling and the stone, before Captain Fane early in the morning after he found them, half covered by dry leaves, underneath the window that had been Miss Hoyt's, and Duggan was puzzled at the young officer's reception thereof. He looked sharply up at the Irishman. "Why do you give me this?" said he. "I have—had seen it before."

"I didn't know that, sir. I thought perhaps you could

understand it, sir," said Duggan civilly, "especially as that dom prowler—that wasn't the one they expected to find—might have dropped it. You see what he's written."

Fane had not seen what he had written, but eagerly took the paper scrawl; stared at it; studied it; then, with utter and undisguised astonishment, accosted the janitor.

"Do you mean these were done up together, and so found, under Miss Hoyt's window?"

"Exactly so, sir," said Duggan. "I was takin' them to the President, sir, but I thought perhaps as an army man was mentioned you'd like to know about it, and then, perhaps——" And Duggan gulped, and halted lamely. He hated to go near the President of late. The ascetic scholar had been growing irascible—he had always been unsympathetic in manner—and Duggan found it cheaper to keep out of the President's way. If he had to see the Doctor the more he could tell about this find the less the Doctor would have to scold. For a moment Fane's face was pale and perplexed. Then he looked the old Irishman straight in the eyes.

"You know nothing more of this, on your word, Duggan?"

"On my wurrud, sir," said Duggan.

"And you have no idea—no suspicion—who it was that has been—night prowling—there at the Hall?"

Duggan shifted a foot and faltered, uneasily. "Among the byes, sir?" he asked. "I don't think it was them—leastwise—at first."

"Then what have you seen? What have you heard? Who is suspected?"

"God knows, sir—barrin' the President 'll tell ye. It's not fur the likes o' me." And in so saying Duggan managed to open Fane's eyes to the nature of the confidential instructions he had received and to the probable cause of the enlistment of the two "bulldogs." Fane stood aghast and amazed, but he would ask nothing further of the man. He now would seek the master.

It was then barely eight o'clock, and by nine, ordinarily, special drill was over and the President was to be found at chapel. Sharp at the hour Fane dismissed his squads and started for the avenue. It was his half-defined purpose to meet the Doctor as he came forth from the brief service with which it was the custom to begin the busy hours of the collegiate day. It was but a third of a mile from the barnlike old gymnasium to the beautiful gothic chapel, and Fane went at speed, yet was surprised to find students and teachers coming away from the stately entrance full ten minutes before the usual time. "Is the President there?" he asked a junior whom he chanced to know, and the reply was still more of a surprise. The President had come and gone without the heart to heart, ten-minute talk with which he so often favored his classes. "He came sir; asked Professor Lyman to read prayers, and almost immediately drove away. Professor Beerbohm was with him in a carriage."

Five minutes later, and as Fane hurried on homeward,

his mind a whirl of conflicting thought and emotion, he saw his sister coming toward him through the bare-limbed, desolate grove,—the sister who had surprised him in the dead hours of the night by her sudden appearance at his room,—the sister whose eyes inquired, though her lips would not, the use to which he had evidently put his revolver. But, though her eyes asked and her tongue refrained he had offered no explanation; he had chided her for being up at such an hour; he had resented it that she seemed to be keeping watch on him; he had, not too gently, too kindly, told her he knew just why there had been a caller at his window; he had in going simply anticipated what that caller had probably to tell. It was one of his own trusted officers, he said, who, with others, had agreed to keep track of a certain lawless element and give him warning of suspicious actions, looking to genuine depredations at the “gym.” He had received earlier warning and had gone. He would tell her more about it when he knew more, and now wished to snatch what sleep he could before the coming of the day. She had left him and gone her way, uncomplaining, unrebuking, for she was still tortured by the memory of her one act of spying. She could not risk offending Ron, and yet she left him with vague distress, with dissatisfaction, even dread, eating at her heart, and now nearly an hour before her own class work began this day she was hurrying forth to find him that she might tell him of something new, something alarming, and she met him almost at the very spot where

she and he had seen that other meeting, that night conference that ended so suddenly and strangely, that meeting to which never since had he even remotely referred.

She saw how pale and grave and stern he looked, and knew with her keen intuition that there was some new trouble, and that what she had to tell would only add to it, but her tidings were of such a nature she felt that Ron must know at once and so at once she began, looking with such depth of love and anxiety into his careworn face:

“Ron, I have hurried to meet you and tell you before you could get home. Such a strange thing! I don’t know what to do or think of it, but soon after you went up to drill this morning, before I was dressed, I heard Dr. Parsons’s voice at the door. He asked for Mrs. Jamieson and she was only just up, and he took her into the little side yard right under my window, almost under yours, and there—I couldn’t help hearing,—he was talking, questioning, about you. She told me everything later, for I frankly told her I had heard the first part of their talk. He asked her what hour you went out, what hour you came home last night, whether anyone came for you, and how late your light was burning. She said she never saw him so excited, so insistent. She said he asked if any letters had been brought to her for you, or any messages left, and whether you ever had a boat and went out on the lake at night. He asked her if she saw you last night, and how you were dressed. He acted, she said, ‘like he wanted to go in and search the room and ward-

robe,' and Mrs. Jamieson couldn't listen to that. Ron, what does it all mean?"

And here, in spite of her effort, poor, brave, loyal, loving, yet sorely troubled Jane felt the sobs rising uncontrollably, and he saw it and should have sought to soothe and comfort, but his heart was raging now. Between what he had seen for himself, what he had heard from certain of his sturdy followers in the battalion, what he had dragged from poor, bedeviled Duggan, and what Jane was telling him, his soul was up in arms, in a fury of wrath against this strange, austere, ice-hearted man, this arch spy and scandal brewer, for so in his blind rage the venerable scholar seemed to this hot-blooded young soldier.

For the moment Fane could only think of the indignity to which he was subjected, believing it all an outcome of the recent demonstrations at Clifton Hall, and never dreaming, as poor Jane was dreaming, of the possibility of something far more dread, something that those powder-blackened fingers had suggested to her hours before, something that in his intense pursuit of another clue he had never stopped to consider. But it was destined to confront him, and with crushing force.

"Which way did he go?" was the question that came hoarsely from his lips. "I've been hunting for him. I need to find him."

"Oh, Ronald, not as you are now—not in your rage! Wait! Come back with me and let me tell you—what you

wouldn't listen to last night. I heard he had gone to town—he and Professor Beerbohm. You can't see him now, and you should know what I know before you see him at all. Come with me, I want to show you." And so she led him and held him, listening, dull and indifferent at first, then in suddenly aroused and vehement interest, for now at last he heard of the adjutant's call, drummed on his window pane,—a call he knew was unknown to nine out of ten of his pupils and probably unfamiliar to all.

Now he heard of the repeated signals, the repeated appearance of the shadow, and knew well before Jane had finished that this was no one of his battalion boys, this was nothing like the signal agreed upon between him and certain of his "trusties"—student officers who were determined to get at the bottom of the mystery of that night assault, and to protect their young commander and their college property from future harm. Then, as Jane went on with her description and showed him where the shape had appeared in front of the wing and where it had later stood at the coping of the well, he took to studying faint footprints on the trampled turf at the rear of the wing, for the early frosts had hardened the pathway; and then, drawing him away, she led him to her own room, and from the windows pointed to the distant roofs on the Island, to the sun-glinting windows of the Roost, and showed him the very casement from whence had streamed that signal light, that five-second flash that seemed to ap-

peal direct to her window and to her, and then Fane's excitement became marked and almost uncontrollable.

And even as he stood there, thrilling with the realization of a new and most important discovery, and longing for Hazlett and a consultation, there came a tap at the door—a servant with a telegram, which he tore open and read:

New developments. Important. Meet me 4:40 to-day.
Central. (Signed) HAZLETT.

He handed it mechanically to Jane, who, gazing from the window, this time toward the street, had laid her hand upon his arm. Three or four passers-by had stopped in front of the next house and were looking curiously back. Two men, under the trees across the unpaved street, had also halted and were standing at gaze. A man, glancing hurriedly up at the window as he passed, strode on through the little croquet ground toward the side door of the wing. A vehicle of some kind had drawn up in front of the house, the heads of the horses just visible from her casement. Another vehicle, half open, reined in at the opposite curb. It was the sight of this that led her to touch his arm. The driver was glancing back. The occupants, two in number, were peeping round the edge of the side curtain of the back seat, and Jane knew the evil face of the nearest at a glance. It was Stetson, senior. The other, dodging back at sight of her, was the son.

Then Mrs. Jamieson's voice, and footsteps that were not

Mrs. Jamieson's, but those of heavy men, were heard on the stairs, and a nameless terror seized the sister's heart, for in another moment a silver star gleamed at the doorway, the lapel of a coat thrown back purposely to permit of its display. The servant-maid recoiled, trembling with mingled embarrassment and fright, and two men, strangers, entered. The foremost held a folded paper in his hand, and stepped straight to the young officer's side:

"Sorry, sir, but this is our warrant and we must trouble you to come with us," he civilly said.

"And why?" asked Fane, his face as white as the star.

"I've been a soldier myself, sir, and I shouldn't say anything if I was you, but—Major Piggott was found on the shore this morning shot,—he's probably dead by this time."

And then they had to turn to Jane, who had fallen senseless.

CHAPTER XI

“DARK’S THE HOUR BEFORE THE DAWN”

THERE was no Fane to meet Captain Hazlett as he stepped from the evening train. The platform was filled with people; the newsboys, yelping like coyotes, were darting to and fro. “All about the murdurr!” was the incessant cry. The *Evening Star* was selling at a premium, and a stranger, a man in civilian dress, touched the captain on the sleeve and bade him step one side.

“We’ve found the major, sir,” he said, “more dead than alive, and they’ve arrested Captain Fane.”

Hazlett’s heart stood still. Had he come then all too late? Had his warnings been ignored—his counsel all vain? Knowing the past, knowing the men, knowing a motive, was the issue to be wondered at? “Take me to him,” was all he said, and entering the hack the two were driven away.

The evening was dark and dull. The wind was whirling spiteful little dust clouds about the streets. Here and there, at the corners and about the doorways of shops and saloons, groups of men and boys were gathered, their numbers increasing somewhat as the hack drew nearer to the county buildings, the court house and the jail.

Some kind of investigation had already been taking place. Sheriff’s officials were bustling about the corridors and portico. Students, in battalion uniform or civilian dress were grouped, observant and almost silent, about the walks and the wide piazza. A carriage containing two college officials had just driven away as Hazlett’s hack rolled up to the curb. Some few students saluted their vanishing superiors, but most of them withdrew no hand from the roomy pockets. They gazed after them with gloomy eyes. The moment Captain Hazlett stepped to the sidewalk the groups began to close in, and an under-sheriff came forward, inquired his name and handed him a dispatch. It was from Headquarters in Chicago. The news had reached the commanding general just after Hazlett left his office. He was enjoined to see Major Piggott as speedily as the hospital authorities would permit, for General Sheridan had been told there was a chance for life. Hazlett asked first to see Fane, and was admitted to an inner room where the young officer was for the present secluded, awaiting report of the surgeons in care of the stricken man. Hazlett’s face was grave, yet alight with relief and confidence as he came forth ten minutes later. Professor Sharpe sprang forward and took him by the hand:

“They would not admit us,” said he, “but Lorimer and I refuse to credit the story, and we want him and want you to know it. Of course, if there’d been a—a fight——?” he paused suggestively.

"There hasn't been a fight," said Hazlett bluntly, "and Ronald Fane is no more capable of shooting down a fellow man in cold blood than you are of stealing."

"It's—it's the hot blood we feared, captain," answered Sharpe, in low tone. "He has had one thing after another to exasperate him of late, and there might have been taunt—insult. We hear they have long been enemies. The story is all over town now."

"Drive with me to the hospital, will you?" asked Hazlett. "I must get there at once," and he bundled them in, Sharpe and Lorimer both. "Now, tell me all you can," he said, as swiftly they drove away.

And so, in part at least, driving to and returning from the mile away retreat where the unconscious victim lay hovering still 'twixt life and death, the men of books and learning told the man of action their tale of trouble. A strange web indeed of strong, though circumstantial, evidence was that they spread before their hearer, who bowed his head in silent, sorrowful acceptance, as point after point was made; yet, when all was said and done, turned sturdily to the main issue and stood by his original verdict. "I still believe it can all be explained," said he. "I still hold him innocent."

Briefly, their stories were brought down to this: Professor Beerbohm was the first to direct suspicion to Fane, —directing it even before the deed. Beerbohm had had to make his peace with the President for that visit to the Stetsons. Beerbohm had confided to the President that

the stranger was a Major Piggott, a near relative of the man they knew as Stetson. Piggott had come here to see his long lost kinsman, and yet had had to ask that it be kept a secret, because, as he now found, Lieutenant Fane was at the college. Lieutenant Fane had served under his command in Arizona, and Lieutenant Fane, smarting under deserved censure for his misbehavior on campaign, had sworn to get even with Major Piggott; had even threatened his life. Fane’s friends in the army had done their best to get Piggott into trouble, but Piggott had been sustained by the War Department and others in authority. Fane’s friends were forced to give up the fight, but Fane swore he would follow it to the bitter end and would “square” sooner or later with the major if it cost him his commission. It was arranged that Stetson was to take good care of the major during his brief stay, and every precaution should be observed to keep Fane in ignorance of the major’s presence; not, of course, on the major’s account, but that of the lieutenant, who was notoriously rash, hot-headed and “might do something to bring scandal or disgrace upon the army and the college,” “as indeed,” said Beerbohm, “we know he has narrowly escaped doing on several occasions here.”

Then, said Beerbohm, Captain Hazlett had come with his ill-advised inquiries (Hazlett, who had been ordered by General Sheridan to go to Groveton and see if the missing officer had been there, because letters found in Piggott’s room came from Groveton and nowhere else),

and Beerbohm reasoned that Captain Hazlett had probably told Mr. Fane of his suspicions. Fane was then seen late at night reconnoitering the Stetson premises and prowling about the college grounds. Beerbohm told all this to the President, and got the President worked up. Then came Duggan with his story and stone, and the clipping from the Chicago *Carbuncle*, and finally the gruesome discovery of Major Piggott's person, "more dead than alive," said the two college workmen who found it, close to Cedar Point and not ten feet from the water's edge. Then the President who had been investigating Fane's night comings and goings, told his tale to the civil officials. Mr. Stetson, who had suddenly reappeared from no one knew where, was called into conference; two more witnesses were examined, and the warrant was issued without delay.

The President's story, of course, neither Sharpe, Hazlett nor Lorimer could expect as yet to hear. Duggan's story they knew. It was through the police they had heard of the strange tale of two employees of the college who were later examined. One of them had been the first to see the half-hidden and unconscious form that very morning. The other had heard a vehement altercation late the previous night. The latter's story had been dragged out of him "bit by bit," said the officials, for he stood self-convicted of a breach of college regulations that might cost him his place. He was custodian at the farm stable. Students had once or twice made midnight

raids; had led away certain mules and a prehistoric donkey, hitching the former to the gate post of a distinguished scientist and stabling the latter at Beerbohm’s doorstep. The professors thus complimented saw no humor in this unhallowed and suggestive invasion of their premises and prerogatives. Scullin, the stable man, was bidden thereafter to remain all night at his charge, and the altercation he heard after one o’clock at night occurred away over on the lake shore near Cedar Point. Scullin had been to town and, returning, came suddenly round a rocky cliff and heard these words in furious tone: “You did me the meanest, most damnable wrong—you did your best to ruin me, and I swore by God that I’d——” And then on a sudden someone said “Hush!” There was an instant scattering; a rowboat shot away from the shore; somebody scurried into the bushes; someone else, a burly man, apparently lame or rheumatic or crippled, “kind o’ staggered against a tree and leaned on a little rustic bench.” Scullin saw just enough of him in the darkness to feel more than sure it was the man found at seven o’clock, shot and senseless. Scullin said he half stopped and just asked if there was any trouble, and the stranger said not to bother, he had a friend in the boat and he’d get along all right. And so Scullin went on and, not ten minutes later, about as he reached home, he heard a shot. He thought perhaps there were two, but he couldn’t be sure, and that was all he knew about what happened as he was coming home.

But the night watchman had said Scullin was there at the stables at 11:15, so the question was asked, What time did Scullin go in town? A little before twelve. Which way? Around by the lake—around the way he came home; he couldn't go through the college grounds without being seen by somebody. Then came the question, Did Scullin see anybody on his way to town, if so, where? Scullin stumbled a bit and spoke with obvious distress. Well, it was too dark to see plain, but he heard someone coming, coming swiftly, along the lakeside path about forty rods town side of Cedar Point, and so Scullin hid in the shrubbery until the man went by. Could he see him then? Well, not distinctly, but he passed between Scullin and the still surface of the lake, and Scullin couldn't help seeing the outline of the figure, and he knew the walk—everybody about the college knew that walk by this time—it was Captain Fane.

Hazlett had been admitted to the bedside of the wounded man and recognized him at a glance. Piggott was unconscious still and moaning at times, and the surgeons were looking puzzled. The major's danger was great they feared, and the gunshot wound was enough, if not more than enough, to bring sudden end to his earthly career. "Yet," said one of the medical men to Hazlett, "there are others." The major had been struck on the head with a blunt instrument. There were bruises, severe ones, on the body, but, said the doctor, "they look a week old," and Hazlett made instant note of it.

Once again they visited the quiet side street where the little army family made their humble home, and Hazlett found them in sorry plight. Mrs. Fane was moaning and prostrate, Clare and her clergyman were ministering to her as best they could, and Clare was inveighing against Jane, ordinarily the most helpful one of the household, now utterly useless. Hazlett had theories of his own as to this, and asked if it were possible to see her. He bore a message from Ronald, so Clare went to ask, and presently called him aloft, and poor Jane, red-eyed and disheveled, appeared at her doorway, and Hazlett was amazed at her prostration. He strove to reassure her. He gave her Ronald’s brave words of cheer and encouragement, and, so far from taking heart, she seemed to cower and shrink and weep afresh. “Would Major Piggott die?” was the one question uppermost in her mind. If so—if so, what would be Ronald’s fate? It was all so unlike what Hazlett had been told of Jane—all so utterly unlike what he expected of her, that he came away distressed and troubled, unable to account for her utter hopelessness, her lack of faith. It even angered him a bit against her, he knew not why.

Then came the drive back to the court house, and the final words with Sharpe and Lorimer. Then another brief conference with Fane, who was now very quiet and self-controlled. There were two things Hazlett yet desired—an interview with the President, and another with Mr. Stetson. The latter had been at the hospital,

not in the patient's room, "for fear of disturbing him," he said, but with the surgeons a few minutes to make most anxious and affectionate inquiries and to urge that nothing be left undone for his kinsman. But Mr. Stetson declined to see Mr. Hazlett or to hold converse with anybody representing Mr. Hazlett. The district attorney and other State officials, he said, had sealed his lips. The President was not at home—had gone round to Professor Sharpe's, and the evening was far gone when Hazlett, following, trailed him thither. The President was as responsive as an icicle, and chiefly concerned with the effect all this must have on the good name of the college. He evidently wished to confer further with Sharpe, and wished Hazlett to go with his mission all unfulfilled. It was while Hazlett was still pleading the cause of his friend that a light footfall was heard on the piazza without, and Sharpe, excusing himself, went to the door. Both gentlemen in the parlor heard the words with which this late arrival greeted the master of the house.

"John, how can I reach Captain Hazlett? She wants to see *him*."

It was Mrs. Sharpe, who for reasons of her own, had hastened to Miss Hoyt long hours before, had returned to her during the early evening, and now, after ten o'clock, had come hurrying homeward with this inquiry.

CHAPTER XII

THE NIGHT OF FLAME

ANOTHER day and Mrs. Hazlett, summoned by wire, had arrived at Groveton and joined her husband, who had need of her. It seems that objection had been made to Captain Hazlett's visiting at Clifton Hall, and Miss Hoyt was not yet well enough to come forth. Indeed, Miss Hoyt had had a relapse; was decidedly worse; had been almost prostrated, like Miss Fane, when the news of this new calamity was, with possibly intentional abruptness, made known to her. And it was in this strange manner and under these sad and solemn circumstances that Fane's gentle friend of Arizona days came again into the orbit of his life, and saw with her own eyes and heard with her own ears the four women of whom he had said so much when the year, now so near its closing, was still young and filled with hope and pride and rejoicing. Ah, how many hours had he spent in telling her of the lady mother, and handsome Clare, and helpful, home-loving, level-headed Jane! How many hours, later, had he spent in telling of Ethel Hoyt, his heroine, his fervent admiration! Do the best of women, I wonder, often find a fellow's sister quite as charming as he pictured her? Do they ever find

his sweetheart sweet as he had painted? Looking back upon the social blunders of some three score years, a man of many experiences once said: "If you want your wife to like your kindred, or your kin to like your wife, don't let either party know it."

A wise little woman was Mrs. Hazlett, prepared in no small degree for disenchantment. Otherwise she would have found it difficult to recognize in the complaining, querulous, elderly valetudinarian the stately leader of garrison society as Roland had described his mother. Clare came nearer to the mark set by her brother, for Clare was blooming in the sunshine of the young rector's devotions, and reveling in the joy of being envied by so many maidens of the parish. Even the calamity that had befallen the family in Ronald's arrest, and the chain of circumstantial evidence against him, had not served to cast her down. If Tremaine, in his secret heart, shared the generally expressed belief in Ronald's guilt he had the sacerdotal wit to hide it. Clare, in her exuberant personality, towered, defiant of public opinion. It was in plain, pragmatical Jane that Mrs. Hazlett found her deepest disappointment and her inexplicable mystery. Jane, who by all Ronald's accounts should have been the brave, helpful, resourceful daughter and sister—Jane, who should have been his dauntless champion—Jane, whom she looked to find stanch, strong and true—Jane proved to be the pessimist and the despairing. Jane, said Mrs. Hazlett to her own sacred self, as we found long afterwards—

Jane seemed to have made up her mind that nothing on earth could save Ronald, and that it was her duty to prepare him, his mother and his friends to face the inevitable. It is oftentimes our own kindred who are most ready to believe the worst. But then, who on earth had seen as much as Jane had seen? Who began to know what Jane knew?

It was straight from a doleful hour with these, his next of kin, that Mrs. Hazlett went in search of the girl whom Ronald Fane had fairly owned he loved, and yet had ceased to woo. Perhaps it was because she had found his kindred so despondent and inert that the little army-bred woman was taken by surprise in the interview that followed. Hazlett, *persona ingrata* to the President and certain of his following in the faculty, could without offense be declined as a visitor to an inmate of Clifton Hall, but even the President could see no way to deny the captain's wife. Beerbohm, it is true, suggested that either the matron or mayhap the amazonian Miss Hinton should be present at the meeting, but the matron promptly begged to be excused, Miss Hinton as promptly placed herself at the service of the college, and Miss Hoyt as promptly declined. She had asked to see Captain Hazlett and, failing in that, had determined to receive Mrs. Hazlett personally. If this was contrary to college tenets and traditions, said Miss Hoyt, she tendered her resignation on the spot, and just as soon as her physician would permit—forty-eight hours at the most—she would move to

other quarters. From a reserved, reticent, almost silent young woman Miss Hoyt had developed suddenly into a maid-of-war, possessed of feverish energy and determined purpose. The President, in the interests of the college, and belief that Miss Hoyt knew much that she had not told, in the company of the matron and Miss Hinton had called upon her as she reclined upon the sofa in the matron's own parlor. It was contrary to the physician's wishes, but, when the President had a manifest duty to perform, what were physicians' injunctions to him? College tradition had it that he once broke in upon family prayers at the dean's and called that venerable exalter from his knees, and his petition to the Throne of Grace, to tell him the Trustees had turned down a desired appropriation, and that he must be up and at them without an hour's delay, then left without apology to either the Almighty or the interrupted. The President desired Miss Hoyt to examine the tethered scroll picked up by Duggan underneath her window, and to tell him the name of the writer. Miss Hoyt examined as desired, and declined. The President then required her to say whether or no she did not know it was written by Mr.—er—Captain Fane, albeit in a disguised hand, and Miss Hoyt, to his perplexity, had replied forthwith and with unlooked-for spirit that that question at least, despite its offensive character, she could and would answer, and then daringly added, "purely out of regard for Captain Fane." Her answer was that she knew he was *not* the writer. The President

was staggered at such unfeminine contumacy, but that answer, and that alone, had to suffice. Miss Hoyt declined further conference. The President left the Hall with no more information than when he came, and yet left it no little wiser.

Miss Hoyt's color, temper and temperature were, all three, some degrees above normal when Mrs. Hazlett was announced, and, though these individual weather indications were all for storm, the matron urged postponement of the interview to unheeding ears. Miss Hoyt would see Mrs. Hazlett at once, and would see her—alone. Mrs. Hazlett, thinking to meet a semi-camphorated invalid, found a fuming young woman, with flaming cheeks and blazing eyes, up and pacing the Persian rug like a caged and taunted tigress. Mrs. Hazlett was fairly startled at her vehemence, and at her beauty. But the girl came straight forward with frankly outstretched and burning hands. "You are the one woman I need to see," the matron heard her say, as she retired and closed the door and left them to an interview that was destined to be momentous.

Not fifteen minutes did Mrs. Hazlett remain. From the public parlor across the hallway the matron saw her come forth; saw her turn; step once more across the threshold; take Ethel Hoyt in her arms and kiss her twice, thrice; then with brimming eyes come tripping in to say a word of thanks before going. Even in her manifest haste and excitement, in something that looked like sup-

pressed, yet fervent, joy, Mrs. Hazlett could not forget that courtesy. Her handclasp was frank and cordial, her words sincere, as she bade the matron adieu and besought her permission to see Miss Hoyt later in the afternoon or evening when she "probably would have much to tell her." Then the waiting carriage whirled her away from the front of a stately façade, almost every window of which was adorned with one or more alert and wondering co-educational faces, and one of the most rejoicing women in all the wide West, even though weighted with a profound secret she could not yet communicate to another soul, was speedily restored to the arms of a soldier husband whose anxious heart bounded instantly with newborn hope at sight of her radiant eyes.

"Be patient and hopeful," Hazlett had said to Fane but an hour or two before, when both patience and hope seemed wearing out under the burden of accumulated ills, and now Hazlett had to taste his own medicine, and be patient, for Evelyn, his wife, was pledged to silence that even he could not break.

That night was one not soon forgotten in the annals of placid, sleepy Groveton. Somewhere toward nine a messenger went at speed to the Stetson house to say that Major Piggott was sinking fast and might not live till dawn. Stetson, senior, had been at the hospital earlier in the day, anxious and assiduous, as became a near and affectionate relative, and the doctors then looked very grave, yet bade him hope. Stetson, junior, had been sent

that morning "to spend a few days with friends at a farm" some dozen miles removed from the scenes of recent turmoil and violence, where, added the fond parent, it seemed impossible for him to regain his accustomed strength. The family physician (Dr. Gilhooly of the Flats) had urged this step, though the son loudly and dutifully declared his intention of standing by his father in all his troubles. In view of later developments, however, these seemed but mock heroics. The messenger found only a servant at home, and one who knew not, she said, what had become of Mr. Stetson. He never left word where he was going. The messenger had been told to bring Mr. Stetson back with him. The patient had been muttering in his semi-delirious state, and had said some things neither nurse nor doctor could quite understand.

The messenger came back without his man, only to be sent forth a second time with injunctions to find him without fail. The doctor in charge also notified the district attorney and certain officials at the county jail. It was suggested that possibly they should bring Captain Fane to the sufferer's bedside. Thrice the sinking man had spoken that young officer's name. The sheriff wished to know whether there was the least hope of return to consciousness or reason—whether the physicians considered an ante-mortem statement possible—and before the sheriff could be summoned again an ante-mortem statement of any description became an impossibility.

Practically alone, among strangers, the spirit of the friendless officer had taken its flight. Without having regained consciousness, Major Piggott had passed away. As "the Senator" boomed forth the hour of twelve, Ronald Fane, separated in turn from his own kith and kin, stood behind the bars accused of, if not yet officially arraigned for, willful murder.

But at twelve o'clock, though the streets and saloons had been scoured for Stetson, the quest had been all in vain. It was twelve and after—long after—when a boat slipped forth from shore to try the Island. The night was dark and cold. The wind was moaning among the stark branches overhead and whipping the foam from the crest of the racing waves. In the shelter of the rocky cliffs there was but little sea. Ten rods out from land, however, the boat began to toss, and its owner, the German boatman, to implore the others to turn back. Stetson wouldn't be coming back with them in such water if he was there, said he, and Stetson's best boat was no bigger nor stancher than this. But his mate at the oar and the tillerman both said "Row on." That tillerman was the envied of his craft before the dawning of another day. He was the correspondent of a Chicago journal that was seldom left in the race for news. He had volunteered for this expedition with a double object in view.

Drenched with spray and well-nigh swamped they managed to make the boathouse on the northeast, the lee shore, of the Island, and there, surely enough, was Stet-

son's little dinghy, in which he must have sculled over early in the evening before the rising of the gale. All about "the Roost" was darkness. Leaving the shivering boatman at the shore, the other two stumbled up the winding pathway until they reached the wind-swept platform at the crest, then groped their way to the black buildings beyond. They were wet to the skin, chilled to the marrow, and in no mood to mince matters. Given a Chicago news-gatherer who had been a college all-round athlete, and a Groveton Sophomore with a zest for adventure, and the combination is not easy to baffle. No answer being vouchsafed to vigorous battering on the door, accompanied with stentorian hails, the journalist found a five-pound rock and declared his intention of heaving it through a window. This brought somebody to the door of the deserted barroom and the Teutonic challenge "*Wer da?*"

"Call Stetson at once and say I've important news for him," said the leader. "Open that door first and let us in. We're frozen!"

"*Nicht versteh*——"

"It's old Dummy, the Dutchman!" broke in the Sophomore disgustedly. "They say Stetson won't let him learn English so's to keep him from blabbing. *I* believe he can understand perfectly."

"Skip back and bring up that boatman. He can interpret. Then there won't be any excuse," and the journalist swore savagely between his chattering teeth as the student

disappeared in the thick darkness. He was gone some minutes. It was hard work lugging that benumbed and dispirited Teuton up the rocks. The promise of possible schnapps at "the Roost" failed to stimulate. Traeumer said he knew better. Stetson never left liquor on the Island after the close of the season for fear old Schwartzkopf would get drunk and set fire to the place. He *had* fired it once last winter, and his big Dutch wife was all that saved it. But the Sophomore pointed out that Stetson was there, and where Stetson abode, even temporarily, there was sure to be whiskey. They found the journalist nearly frozen, and entirely exasperated. The custodian had been deaf to either threat or blandishment, and "*Stetson nicht hier*" was all he would say. It might be all that he could say, but the journalist didn't believe it. Then Traeumer took a hand, and shouted their ultimatum in furious low German, and still the sturdy guardian refused to unbar. Stetson was not there, had not been there, he declared, and he was forbidden, under pain of losing his job, to admit anyone to the buildings at night. Then his wife, too, joined in, and jabbered shrill protest, and all the time the waves were beating loud on the stony beach, the wind was whistling through the snapping branches and screeching through knotholes in the ramshackle out-buildings, and every now and then assailing their ears with low, unearthly moanings as of a dumb brute in agony. Or was that the wind? There was something so horribly uncanny about the sound, and there was more

sound of snapping—and the situation was getting unbearable.

“Open, or I’ll smash the door!” shouted the journalist, for the last time, heaving aloft a rock as big as his head. “Open, or I’ll smash!” translated Traeumer, and then—something smashed of its own accord around the corner—around on the lee side of “the Roost”—and, groping thither to reconnoiter, the Sophomore found himself choking and coughing in smoke dense as the darkness, pouring in volumes from a cracked cellar window and driven by heat like that of a furnace, and the Sophomore’s voice went up in a yell that split through the night like the warning shriek of the Siren: “By God, it’s all afire!” and from the depths within, the moaning of some half-strangled sufferer changed to a choking, stifling cry: “Help! Help! For Christ’s sake help!”

And then the journalist held his hand no longer. Crash went the rock through pane and screen, shivering the glazed panel to fragments, and giving instant way for the wind. Split and smash went another window on the opposite side, and then, all in a second, a lurid flame burst from the cellar gratings at three different points on the townward side. Up flew an ax in the Sophomore’s muscled hand and, amidst shrieks and jabberings from within, the door strained at bolt and hinge under the repeated blows, and then something gave way and, all three, the invading rescuers burst into the barroom, dimly lighted by a single candle blinking through thick and

blinding smoke. Through an opposite door, screaming with afright, the woman had gone. Stumbling back from a narrow hallway, blind and choking, came Schwartzkopf again. "*Ach, Gott! Herr Stetson! Im feuer!*" he sputtered in dismay; then, on all fours, went floundering out to the open air.

"Come on!" cried the Chicago-bred leader. Fires to him were things of daily and familiar use. The flames were bursting up the cellar stairway as he rushed, bent nearly double, through the hall, the Sophomore smothering at his heels. Guided by the moans and imprecations, they smashed in a flimsy door to the right, and the instant it gave way, admitting the sweep of the wind, another door slammed across a narrow apartment; a snap and crinkle of glass told of another window collapsed at the touch of the blaze; a fierce tongue followed them into the room, hissing and searing as it came, yet mercifully lighting their way, and there on a pallet lay a writhing form that, never stopping to question, they seized and shouldered and thrust screaming in agony out through the quickly shattered window, never heeding how or where it might fall without, noting only that the face, the form, the weight were by no means those of Stetson! And then, their own retreat cut off by the flames, they snatched open the door that had slammed, searched through the next chamber for Stetson, and found nothing but rubbish and smoke and blistering heat, with tiny jets of fire curling in from the transom, and creeping up through every crack

from the cellar below, and then, with scorched feet and smarting eyes they floundered somehow into the porch beyond and presently lay gasping on the sod while, amidst the wailing of the old German *hausfrau* and the mad shoutings and caperings of her burly mate, with hiss and roar and spiteful snappings the flames tore wildly through the cedars close at hand and up the stairway of the tinder box of a tower, and all in another minute "the Roost" was one magnificent sheet of flame, tossing shingle and shutter on the wings of a gale that sent them sailing far out over the red-crested billows, lighting the skies for leagues around.

Then presently, though they at the Island heard it not, the deep-toned bell at the far-away court house boomed loud on the night in the old-fashioned fire alarm. Be-lated locomotives in the railway yards took up the clamour with shrill-screaming whistle. Other bells awakened and joined their discordant clanging to the general uproar, and Groveton at large turned out of bed to see what was the matter, and found the blazing embers of a distant conflagration shooting toward them across a mile of tumbling, blood-red surges, and threatening the municipal roofs and walls with responsive fire. For full ten minutes there was wild scurry and confusion—a rush for hand engines, hose, wet blankets and ladders—and then, almost as swiftly as they rose, the fierce, billowing flames sank low in the west; a dull, ruddy glow succeeded the lurid light at the Isle; and, as the pallid gleam of coming day

appeared in the Orient sky, only a pungent, biting, cedar-scented cloud of smoke, low drifting, told that all was over with Stetson's Roost, and then, as the few boats that ventured forth came dripping back to the shore, the wild rumor went round, too, that all was over with Stetson.

Separated though they had been through life, so far as Groveton could judge and determine, therefore, the kinsmen in death were reunited.

CHAPTER XIII

CONFUSION WORSE CONFOUNDED

IT was another day before the search could be begun for the calcined bones of the supposedly consumed owner of "the Roost." It was three days or more before the searchers came to the conclusion that no human being lost life within those blazing walls. Captain Hazlett had earlier expressed his doubts, and the journalist his opinions, on that head. The Schwartzkopfs, male and female, declared that Stetson had appeared there early the previous evening just after dark, just before the wind arose; found it dangerous to attempt to go back and so determined to spend the night at "the Roost," one room in which was always ready for him. Nevertheless, they had their instructions to admit nobody, and to deny at any time his presence. They had retired as early as eight o'clock, leaving him smoking and reading in the bar. A friend of his, a sick gentleman, they said, occupied the adjoining room. He had been there four or five days already. There had been another gentleman—a big, elderly gentleman like Herr Stetson—some days earlier, but he had gone, oh, several days already, and this gentleman he had something wrong with his leg and could not walk and was all the time in bed—he was all that was left

except themselves—and of this man they could tell next to nothing except that they were required to cook something for him to eat three times a day, and sometimes he would not eat it, and the doctor had been out to see him. No, they knew not the doctor's name. They would not believe Herr Stetson had gone, despite their contrary assertions to the visitors, until the fact was thoroughly established that not only Stetson's dinghy, but Traeumer's boat, had either slipped the moorings or been spirited away. The dinghy, bottom up, was washed ashore at the east end of the lake by dawn of the first day to break after the fire, and Traeumer's boat was encountered empty, tossing on the troubled waters a hundred yards from shore, by a barge load of daring young fellows pulling out to the scene of the fire, perhaps twenty minutes after the alarm.

Then search was made at Stetson's home, and he was not there, and the domestics declared he had not been there. Then certain correspondents drove out to the farm of the friend twelve miles in the country, and found that young Stetson, supposed to be there, had left the evening of the fire; had driven 'cross country six miles to a railway station, where he had bought a ticket and taken a train for Chicago. Then the Chicago journalist, his hands and face still swathed in bandages, was seen by Captain Hazlett and a fellow newspaper man, and told them something of his views. Then a young fellow but little known in the neighborhood because he had been

several years away, either at sea or in the army, came into the hospital and asked to be allowed to see the broken-legged, semi-scorched and somewhat scratched and mutilated patient brought thither for treatment after the fire, too crazed with pain, terror and fever even to give his name. Thinking to get information, the doctors admitted this caller, who looked and was apparently satisfied with a glance, but declared he did not recognize the man, and declared it with such mendacity of mien that the doctors believed he *did*. That night, late, Miss Hoyt, boarding now at Jones' near the Jamiesons, got a queer note that brought her with Mrs. Hazlett to the hospital on the following day. It said in so many words: "There's been foul play at the Island. Your help came too late. He didn't get away in time. Go and look at the man brought to the hospital from Stetson's Roost."

All they could see was a bandaged head and form. The hair was singed off, said the attendant, but Miss Hoyt took one restless, twitching hand, glanced at it just one moment, and bathed it with her tears. Then she knelt and whispered in the sufferer's unheeding ear, and then the carriage took them to the telegraph office, whence dispatches were sent, rush, to Andrew Hoyt, Esq., Care Brevoort House, New York, also to Captain Hazlett, Recruiting Office, Clark Street, Chicago, and that night the former, despite the infirmities of years, was on his way; that night the latter was again on the spot.

Three days later a conference took place at Groveton,

It followed close upon a scene at the hospital. An elderly gentleman, bent and sorrowing, had called in company with Miss Hoyt and was taken to the bedside of the still unconscious sufferer, who seemed burning away in fever and delirium. There the elder bowed his head and knelt in wordless sorrow. There father and daughter spent some twenty minutes, sometimes mutely watching the restless tossing of the patient, sometimes murmuring words of hope and comfort to each other, for even Mrs. Hazlett would not now intrude upon their grief. The house physician came at the call of an attendant, and to him, in taking leave, the old man spoke briefly. "I have rescued but little," said he, "from the wreck of what was once a large fortune, but I have enough and to spare, and I beg you to command me if money can save this poor boy. I beg you to spare no expense for anything that may restore him. We shall be here now—to the end, whatever it may be."

More than this the gentleman did not say, as, leaning on his daughter's arm, they took their way into the wintry sunshine. Miss Hoyt had moved to still other quarters at Groveton's one hotel deserving of the name, and this move was made only at the father's urgent plea.

A few hours after their visit Captain Hazlett, in company with the sheriff and a member of the local police force, appeared and was shown to the same bedside. His visit had been expected and arranged for. Some of the face bandages had been removed, and Hazlett bent and

examined the pinched and still discolored features, then rose and nodded affirmatively as he glanced at the sheriff.

"You recognize 'him, then?" asked the latter, in low tone.

"Yes, I knew him as a private trooper in the cavalry in Arizona. He was serving there under the name of Hayden."

"After which—he—deserted?" asked the official.

"After which he was reported a deserter."

The conference referred to came later still. The confinement was telling seriously on the health of Captain Fane. Bail had been tendered by Captain Hazlett, reinforced by others, and in any reasonable amount, and bail had been refused. Groveton had had no such distinction in the way of crime in all its previous history, and Groveton could not let its captive go. Something, therefore, had to be done, and certain officers of the law were called into conference with certain local lights of the law to listen to a new phase of the case, and, before this counsel, veiled and sorrowing, yet calm and self-possessed, her aged father by her side, appeared Ethel Hoyt. All that passed was known, until long after, only to those few, and these kept their own counsel, and her confidence.

On the morrow, it was decided, Miss Hoyt should be heard by the district attorney, and by an eminent jurist long a friend of Colonel West. With bowed head, weeping, and escorted by silent, sympathetic officials, she was shown to the waiting carriage; her father, tremulous and

sad-faced, took a seat beside her, and the counsel's words as he closed the door revealed nothing of what had taken place, but something perhaps of what was yet to come.

"Then I shall call for you at ten—to-morrow."

But "at ten to-morrow" the learned counsel had heard other tidings that gave him pause. A "wire" from Chicago at nine o'clock had blanched his face with consternation, not unmingled with awe. It followed close on the heels of announcement to which he listened, incredulous; then turned and whistled in professional, yet not unnatural, disgust.

Late that previous evening, in the office of the sheriff and the presence of two deputies, at the very moment that Ethel Hoyt appeared before the council, the prisoner had been allowed to see his sister, Miss Jeannette Fane. She had spent ten minutes clinging to his hand and murmuring low. He was looking very ill, very sad, and far from hopeful, and it could not be said that her visit was doing much to cheer him. Indeed it was he who seemed striving to reassure and comfort. Mother, she said, would be with him on the morrow, and Clare, with Mr. Tremaine, so that he should not seem to be without friends when called to face his accusers. Finally it came time for her to go, and the deputy respectfully so informed her. At the door she turned, flung herself into her brother's arms and sobbed brokenly, hopelessly, almost hysterically: "Oh, Ronald, Ronald!" she cried. "If I could *only* have advised you—influenced you!" And now at last his pa-

tience and forbearance seemed on the point of giving way. He held her still close-enfolded in his embrace, but his tired eyes had flashed with sudden resentment, his lips compressed, and his voice in answering was low and stern:

"This is unworthy of you, Jane, and your father's daughter," he said, "and most unjust to me. Think of what you virtually accuse me." And then he kissed her and sent her, still sobbing uncontrollably, to the carriage awaiting her at the door. It all made its impression on the sheriff's people, even though the words were almost entirely inaudible, and these two were looking queerly at each other as they closed the carriage door and were about to signal to the driver, when up came Hazlett, for once in his life displaying haste and excitement.

"Is that Miss Fane?" he cried. "Don't let her go! I have news——" Then, following, came the sheriff, perplexed, perturbed, evidently not too full of gratification, yet bubbling over with ill-suppressed emotion.

"Will you come back, Miss Fane?" asked the captain. "I have great news for Ronald—and cannot even wait for my wife to join us. She has gone home with Miss Hoyt."

Dumbly, wonderingly, Miss Fane obeyed, and once more traversed the ill-ventilated corridor, and once again, in the dingy little office, stood in the presence of her captive brother. With a deputy behind him, he was seated at the sheriff's desk writing a brief note before retiring

to his cell. He looked up quickly, a light of hope and expectation in his eyes at sound of Hazlett's footsteps. Following Hazlett came the sheriff, who nodded significantly to his assistant and the latter slowly and reluctantly turned and went out. The limbs of the civil law seemed somehow to find mournful comfort in standing sentry over the military, and the deputy hated to leave when, mayhap, there was something to be learned. The sheriff closed the door, and Hazlett went straightforward and put a trembling hand on the young officer's shoulder.

"Ronald, old fellow, it has come out as I thought——"

"Stetson? Have they got him?" broke in Fane, rising quickly from the desk and facing them; then holding forth a hand to Jane.

"Stetson?" queried Hazlett, puzzled and surprised. "No, but they've got him—Piggott's murderer—whatever may have been his excuse. It's Hayden, the lad whose life you saved at Tonto Pass."

The light that had flashed to the prisoner's eye began to pale; the faint color that had swept to his cheek slowly faded away. Jane herself, who had eagerly hung upon Hazlett's opening words, now, so far from showing joy, turned once more away and sank, dispirited, into a chair.

"I don't understand," said Fane slowly. "Surely *he* never said so."

"No, indeed, but *she* did! Ethel Hoyt—his own sister, Fane—told us the whole story—his threats against Piggott, and then——"

"Stop!" said Fane, holding up his hand. "Do you mean that she—Ethel—Miss Hoyt—has accused this dying man—of Piggott's murder?" And Fane's face in its wonderment, in its mingling of gratitude, of secret joy, and yet of incredulity, was something marvelous to see.

"I mean just that," said Hazlett. "She said he owed his life to you—had declared to her his determination to punish Piggott, and yet his fear of being recognized by him—his purpose of shooting him if he had to——"

And here poor Jane covered her face in her hands and was bending forward, rocking miserably in her chair. Had not she, too, well-nigh denounced her own brother, and a very different kind of brother than had Ethel Hoyt, that weakling, lying, incapable of speech or action, in hospital? Had not she—but there was time for no further self-accusation. In the midst of silence so deep that one could almost have heard the drop of a feather, Ronald spoke:

"It's all—impossible!" said he. "Whether his name be Hoyt or Hayden, that man had nothing to do with it!"

No wonder Lawyer Biggs, of counsel for the defense, was disgusted with such a case and such an intractable client. No wonder he stared over the dispatch that came tumbling almost on the heels of this announcement.

"Found Stetson. Far gone, Del. Trem. Tried shooting. What instructions?"

CHAPTER XIV

THE WOMAN AT THE BOTTOM

THERE had been sudden hegira from Groveton to Chicago of prominent watchers of this now celebrated case. Thither sped Captain Hazlett, Counselor Biggs and one of his brothers in the law. Thither followed Dr. Gilhooley of the Flats, for Stetson's condition was pronounced alarming, and Gilhooley's bill for professional services, rendered to Stetson's household at home or on the Island, exceeded the aggregate of most all the others. Stetson, when found, was far gone in drink, under the roof of kindred spirits—and dealers therein—well over on the West Side. Stetson, when found, was in no condition to give account of himself or his wanderings, and the denizens of his refuge swore stoutly that he had come to them well drunk, and had so remained until the inevitable consequences appeared and he took to pistol practice as a diversion. They had him locked up in an upper room, where the police were called on to disarm a maniac. Now, recognized by the detective employed by Biggs and Hazlett, he lay raging and raving under the care of trained nurses and the guardianship of the law. Dr. Gilhooley was informed that, despite his claim to be the patient's family physician, he could not be allowed

to intrude. The case was one only specialists could handle. Dr. Gilhooley inquired for Stetson, the son, and was properly shocked and scandalized to hear that that young man had vanished, with all the big "wad" the father had had in his possession, the very morning symptoms of mental derangement appeared. Then Gilhooley was ready to engage in the pursuit of the son, yet declined to join forces with the legal and accredited persons at work in the matter. "The case is one only specialists can handle," said he rejoicefully; "and this time I'm the specialist." Then Gilhooley disappeared.

Three days and nights did Stetson rave and rage and suffer the torments of the damned before the physicians found their treatment beginning to prevail. Then followed days of utter prostration, and meantime that other patient, Hayden, worn down to a skeleton, was beginning slowly and almost imperceptibly to mend. Perilously near death's door had he drifted. Twice the father and sister had been summoned to his bedside to see him die, and still he lived, just barely lived, and knew them not at all. If either patient, here at Groveton or there at Chicago, in the course of his delirium had revealed aught connected with the mystery of Piggott's murder, no one of the few watchers would admit it.

Stetson was the first to get on his feet, the shadow of his former self, pallid, nervous and shaken, yet feverishly anxious, it was noted, for news from Groveton. It was considered wise at first to conceal from him the tidings of

Major Piggott's death. They might have spared themselves the trouble. It was in every paper of prominence in the West the day following the fire, and Stetson had not broken down until nearly a week thereafter. What the doctor and the legal luminaries were considering was the fact that, if he *had* seen the item in the papers, his conduct was callous in that he had gone on a spree in Chicago instead of going back to the funeral at Groveton. Another thing that called for comment and explanation was the fact that he, who had been so assiduous in his attentions before the night of the fire, should have manifested so little interest in the disposition of his kinsman's remains and effects, but that may have been due to his dazed condition. He woke to sudden and sordid interest even before the doctors looked for it.

Piggott had been buried quietly and without the customary military honors. Three officers, designated by General Sheridan, came from Chicago, and, after conference with the legal representatives of the Stetsons as well as those of the unseen, unknown Mrs. Piggott, had examined such papers and effects as were with him during his ill-starred visit to Groveton. Nothing was found, there, at least, to throw much light on his past, but the officers before going to Groveton had overhauled the contents of the desk, trunk and wardrobe at the Chicago lodgings, and Hazlett was able to listen with the equanimity of superior wisdom to the remarks and theories of the legal gentlemen wrangling over the right to posses-

sion of the effects. There was much to tell, but the time was not ripe. Among the valuables in Piggott's trunk were the badges of one or two military societies to which he belonged, by virtue of having borne the commission of a field officer of volunteers during the civil war, and with these was that inexpensive trifle, to gain which many a soldier has risked his life—and some few have periled their reputations for veracity—the Medal of Honor. Hazlett and his comrades shook their heads at sight of it.

It had been expected that Piggott's disconsolate widow—she who had so energetically pursued him during the last years of his life—would be present to follow his shrouded remains to the grave, but, acting on the advice of her legal representative, said the Chicago firm, "Mrs. Piggott has decided not to appear. Her rights," said they, "will be fully protected." The major had property in the East, also certain U. S. bonds, it was believed, and the whereabouts of these the lawyers were more than eager to ascertain. Finding the officers close-mouthed and uncompromising, they resorted to the by no means novel tactics of assailing them through the press. Hazlett and his associates were presently and publicly accused of having guilty knowledge of the disappearance of valuable securities held by the late Major Piggott. The papers speedily found their way to the slowly recuperating Stetson, and then that worthy awoke in earnest. Stetson demanded to know what steps had been taken to bring to the bar of justice the murderers of his beloved and honored kinsman,

Major Piggott. Every man in the least acquainted with the situation and facts, said he, knew the culprit could be none other than Captain Fane.

Hayden still lay helpless in hospital, inert, unconscious, and with the chances for recovery all against him. Stetson, jr., had gone. The police, the reporters, the lawyers and the soldiers would not say where, and most of them could not. The one remarkable thing was that Stetson himself, though a large sum of money had gone with the boy, refused to make the faintest charge against him, and declared his conviction that his son would turn up all right unless there were more Fanes about and he had been foully dealt with; yet, even while stoutly affirming the innocence of the young man of any crime, manifesting the keenest anxiety on his account and hourly praying for news of him. Gilhooley had gone back to Groveton in disgust, and was making vague threats as to what would happen to certain people if they interfered with his prerogatives again. And Stetson's own lawyer had been summoned from Groveton to Chicago, whence he presently returned bristling with information and importance. Stetson, he said, would be able in a week to return to his own, and then we should see what we should see.

And in two days less than a week Stetson was home again, and now, said Groveton, the climax has come and this painful mystery shall be solved, once and for all time. In some way the story had got abroad that when, on

strong circumstantial evidence, the murder of Major Piggott had been shifted from the shoulders of Captain Fane to those of the possibly dying and well-nigh defenseless youth in the county hospital, the prop that might have saved Captain Fane had been kicked from under his feet, promptly and indignantly, by Captain Fane himself. It was the strangest case Groveton had ever encountered or ever heard of. Yet it was to encounter a stranger still, and that right soon.

Fane, spurning relief on false pretenses, had none the less begun to mend. He who had been sad, dispirited and well-nigh broken, seemed to find new and joyous heart. From the very moment that Hazlett came to him with the announcement that Ethel Hoyt had declared him innocent, and her own brother responsible for the death of Major Piggott, Ronald Fane seized a new lease on life, a new grasp on hope, energy, and even happiness. His mother and sisters were amazed at the change in him. He and Hazlett had had one brief conference before the captain started forth on another quest. Fane had been gaining in health and spirits even in the face of the fact that the toils of suspicion were tightening about him and the surveillance of his every word and act was closer. He had been allowed to see his counsel and his kindred, but denied to all others. He had killed his case if not himself, said most of the wise men of Groveton, yet he looked younger, blither, stronger than he had looked since the evening of that brutal assault in the west grove.

And he looked to the full as brave and confident and well, even on the morning when, in presence of the sheriff, the district attorney and certain of the police, Stetson, the elder, appeared in person, repeated his accusation and told his tale.

The deceased, said he, was in Groveton on important personal business. He preferred not to go into details as to that business until, or unless, it should be necessary, but it was "solely between themselves." They had been reared together in the same village way down East and, though widely separated for many years, had been brought together through business and family matters. Piggott had told him of the young officer's misbehavior in face of the enemy in Arizona. Piggott had said that army influence on the father's account had whitewashed the son, but the stain still showed; the young man had vowed vengeance, and Piggott was really afraid to meet him. This was why the major's movements had been circumscribed. He lived by day over on the Island, and was to come to the mainland only at night, until their business could be finished and he could return to Chicago, get his belongings and go on about his leave. But, despite Stetson's caution, the two had met; recognition was instant. There had been furious words on both sides, probably, and the major told him, Stetson, that Fane then and there swore he would get his arms and shoot him on sight; that he would follow him to the Island if need be, but "nail him" somewhere he certainly should. Stetson tried to laugh

the major out of his "funk," but the major was really in dread of his life. That night, late, Piggott must have pulled himself ashore and attempted to get away,—must have encountered Fane, who was seen as late as midnight in the neighborhood; then had followed the furious quarrel heard in part by Scullin; then the shooting. Now there could be no other theory.

The conference, if such it might be called, had taken place in the sheriff's office, and by appointment. Stetson, accompanied by his reinstated physician and familiar, Dr. Gilhooley, had been conveyed thither in a closed carriage; was met there by his legal friend and adviser, another of the gifted though sometimes erratic Hibernian type, and these gentlemen had insisted on their rights as well as their duty to accompany him. To this there had been some demur on part of the sheriff, who seemed in a semi-dazed condition at times ever since Fane's deliberate refusal to escape at the expense of another. Moreover, the sheriff had been thrown in contact more or less with Hazlett and his unobtrusive civilian associate from Chicago, a detective, as the sheriff had sense enough to know. The sheriff had been severe in the discharge of his duties as custodian-in-chief of the accused officer, and now was wishing he had been less aggressive. Hazlett and his friend had evidently eminent and powerful backing, "big lawyers in consultation, and one big little general tremendously interested in the case." His theory that Fane was the culprit had been staggered a bit, and he greedily wel-

comed the announcement that Stetson was coming to fasten the crime where it belonged.

But Stetson failed to fasten things quite as firmly as the sheriff had been led to expect. Moreover, to the chagrin of the district attorney and the sheriff both, there had come this same Hazlett, this well-garbed and -groomed man of middle age, with a letter from the Governor himself, a gentleman obviously so sure of himself and his mission that he vouchsafed no other explanation to either of the officials than that he was there "in the interests of the defense." He sat watching Stetson, and never interposed word or question until Stetson's announcement that there could be no other theory. Then at last he spoke:

"In your opinion, then, Mr. Stetson, there could have been no other—motive?"

Stetson turned weakly and surveyed him, not without uneasiness. "What stronger motive should there be?" he said. "Didn't he want revenge?"

"Was there no one whom Piggott had wronged, infinitely more than he wronged Captain Fane?" And Hazlett sat toying with his pointed pencil and even tilting back in his chair, yet eyeing his man with calm, implacable scrutiny.

"How should I know?" demanded Stetson, something of his old truculence for the moment appearing.

"For instance," continued Hazlett, "Piggott would have robbed Fane of his reputation, but he failed ignominiously. He robbed another man of his good name,

of his home, of his wife, all three—— Pray don't rise, Mr. Stetson."

"It's a —— ——, damnable lie!" burst in Stetson, but his face was something fearful to see.

"It's what your own son says," continued Hazlett, with cold-blooded insistence, "and I have brought him here to repeat it. Would you mind inviting them in, Mr. Sheriff? They are in that carriage."

Stetson's chair went back with a crash as, with starting, staring eyes, with the sweat bursting from his forehead and trickling down his face, he staggered to his feet and started for the door. "I'm choking," he cried, as an officer restrained him. "I'm choking!" and indeed he looked it, but Hazlett coolly lowered the sash and the officer led the stricken man to a seat beside him. Sit, however, he would not. Staring from the window and shaking in every limb, the wretched father looked forth upon a wretched son being led limply up the stone flagging from the gate, and followed by a woman in deep mourning. A moment more and they were at the doorway, and then, even Hazlett's calm left him at sight of the agony in the face of the cornered victim. Turning once more toward the interior of the room the policeman's arm barely sustaining him, the father gazed dumbly for one moment upon the abject and miserable form that faltered at the threshold. Then up went both clinched fists in mid-air, shaking in impotent, intolerable wrath, amaze and dreadful grief and despair. Then down,

straight forward, he went, plunging headlong to the floor, and the blood was gurgling from his mouth as they sprang and raised him, and a woman, in funereal black, threw herself upon her knees before them all and was sobbing loudly, wildly: "My God! My God! Have I killed you, too?"

CHAPTER XV

AS TOLD OF THE MAJOR

I DON'T know anything about that," the President was saying, as, some ten days later, he was in argument with certain of the Faculty in his library. Professors Sharpe, Lorimer and others, a committee of five, had expressed a desire to be "heard," as the condition of affairs in higher collegiate circles was that usually described as "strained relations." In point of fact there had been a serious split in the circle—Professor Beerbohm and one or two of similar pith having declared their intention of resigning forthwith. Then, as no vehement opposition to the step was heard, the next announcement was to the effect that they would not resign under fire—this in face of the fact that there seemed far less of fire than ice in Faculty circles since the collapse of the case against Fane. One feminine member of the corps of instructors had added her announcement to that of Beerbohm, and, despite her years of service, possibly because of her years, she, too, had encountered no violent opposition—Miss Hinton. One feminine member of that corps, without announcement other than that recorded in a previous page, had summarily tendered her resignation; had declined to

reconsider; had declined to receive the President when he came, as he said, to "set matters straight," and had with cold but scrupulous courtesy listened unbending to the pleadings of the President's wife. Miss Hoyt, as yet at least, saw no room for reconciliation. Moreover, Miss Hoyt and her father had gone East just as soon as the young man recognized as Hayden, and now known to be Hoyt, was pronounced out of danger of death. It was to plead for his relief from other danger they had hastened to Washington—that of arrest for desertion.

Captain Fane had not yet resumed his duties at the college, and a rumor was in circulation that he had received an offer of a much better billet, which rumor had caused a stir in the battalion and an appeal to the powers. Sharpe and Lorimer, at least, knew that General Sheridan had directed that as soon as Fane felt able he should come to him at division headquarters. The little general had not forgotten the older division commander with whom he had served at Chattanooga. Sharpe and Lorimer had been devoted to Fane in his hours of bitter trial, and the strained relations in the Faculty had grown from the fact that the President, having been largely instrumental in bringing Fane to grief,—of course "in the best interests of the college,"—could not now expect to be taken into friendship or fellowship. Nevertheless he did so expect, and was aggrieved and offended that, beyond the cold respect accorded him as head of the institution, Fane, as he put

it, "had shown an unchristian spirit and declined to be mollified." The good doctor could not understand such contumacy. No man on earth could assail or impugn the rectitude of his intentions, and, because his intentions were unimpeachable, the results, whatever they were, should be accepted by all loyal collegians whatever their degree. Sharpe had amazed him by asking whether he had made amende or apology of any kind, and finally Sharpe and his colleagues had formally asked to be heard.

Now, people asking to be heard by the President had noted these facts. If he felt no interest in the matter they could talk, uninterrupted, until the call of time. If, however, he felt much interest they could hardly talk at all. The President would take up the running and they who had asked for a hearing found as a result that "Prex" was the only one heard. "I don't know anything about that," he was again saying, while they sat discomfited and he strode the floor. "What I maintain is that this college is not the proper place for midnight prowlings and mysterious movements of any kind. I disapprove the idea of professors promenading at all hours under the windows of our women teachers or their pupils, either—especially in the dead of night."

"That was not Captain Fane at all, as we all know, and as we think you know, Mr. President," interrupted Sharpe unhappily, "and——"

"Let me finish, Professor Sharpe," said the doctor,

with uplifted hand. "Mr.—er—Captain Fane was the only man actually seen or reported to me as having been seen there at night, and my action was based on what I then knew and believed, not by what we have heard since, and with this, I apprehend, Mr. Fane should be satisfied."

"With this, Mr. President, in all deference," replied Professor Sharpe, "I apprehend Captain Fane will not be satisfied. I certainly should not. I doubt if the trustees or the public will be. There has been an entire revulsion of sentiment since the unmasking of Stetson, and now that that precious pair are shown in their true light Captain Fane looms up rather as a martyr."

"I don't know anything about——" began the President hastily, but balked at the last word. He did know something about it. He had seen many an indication pointing to just the conclusion heralded by Sharpe, and, even to himself, the President couldn't lie. It had been dawning upon him that the trustees, the college, the public, would actually expect of him something more than rectitude of intention. It was beginning to come home to him, and not entirely because of Sharpe's vehement expressions, that something more than assurance of gratification was due from him to Fane, and when once the President saw a duty the President was the man to go and do it. But the President had been bewildered, small wonder, by the remarkable array of facts that, one after another, came to light after the arrest of Stetson.

Of him, the latest victim of a combination of circumstances, it may be said at once there was little likelihood of his living to expiate his crime or atone for his misdoing. Stetson was a doomed man, and he knew it, and mortal hands were doing all that skill could devise to stay, not to speed, his dissolution. Bowed and crushed by a grief that for the time seemed to outweigh all sense of his criminal deeds, Stetson was facing the final settlement of his earthly affairs, half paralyzed, heart-broken. Whatever his sins, he had had one great love and tenderness—his only son. Years of his life he had planned and plotted, bullied, fawned and lied for that boy, and the graceless cub had quit him in his misery and betrayed him in his crime. Followed, “shadowed,” and finally seized, young Stetson, in terror when told he was suspected of complicity in the death of Piggott, threw himself on the mercy of his captors and needlessly told the whole miserable story. Detail for detail it proved to be, so far as the father’s part was concerned, substantially true. There was a conscience-smitten woman, too, to corroborate. There was “Hayden” Hoyt, in his turn, to whisper feeble assent. There was the comparatively strange young man who worked and dwelt on the Hawkins place east of town—he who had been long away in the Army or Navy—to add his testimony. There were Schwartzkopf and his burly wife. There were Scullin and other hands at the college farm. There was old Duggan. There was even, finally, Ethel Hoyt.

Long years had Stetson lived at Groveton, building up from small beginnings a big, if disreputable, business, and acquiring the powers of a ward boss and machine politician. Of his past he had chosen to say little that was reliable. The boy who came with him was the one creature for whom he showed affection. So long as he remained poor there was none to dog his footsteps. So soon as he became rich, and his riches were referred to abroad, he began to hear from kindred and former friends who for a decade had forgotten him, and through these eventually came the story of his early life. He hailed from an eastern State. His father had been a prosperous business man who, when well along in years, fell in love with, wooed and won a young widow, Mrs. Piggott. One son was born to him; one son had she born to her first husband; and so the young Piggott and the young Stetson, with four years between them, grew up as boys together, half brothers, but seldom half friends. Early in the 50's Stetson, the youth, lost his heart to an extremely pretty girl in a neighboring town. They were married contrary to the father's wish, for the old trader had heard much against her and her people, but, when the deed was done, he sought to make the best of it. The daughter-in-law proved selfish, complaining, exacting. Even the coming of the baby boy did not mend matters. She was forever demanding money, and more money, and poor Stetson, infatuated, begged, borrowed, and Piggott finally put it in his way to steal for

her. The father condoned and forgave, which was not what Piggott expected. He had come home from somewhat fruitful ventures, and had much more means than Stetson, who soon had none. He felt the spell of that young woman's beauty, and himself became infatuated. It was not long before there was another big theft, a bigger one than before, and it was proved again against Stetson. Friends and neighbors by this time were whispering that he was more sinned against than sinning, and so it presently proved. Piggott, for a time, was missing. Stetson took his little boy, the few dollars his aging father would give him, and shook the dust of the home town from his feet. The elders lived but a short time. Piggott came back and took up the business. The lady in the case, "deserted" by her husband, was given a divorce, and presently reigned as Mrs. Piggott. The community didn't like them, and they moved away. Piggott would have said West, but that was where Stetson had gone, so they went still farther east, where it was not many years before Piggott regretted him of his bargain, if not of his sins. The war came on, and he was not sorry to leave her, in peace. Piggott was a good worker. He worked into a captaincy and then into a recruiting detail, and while so occupied got the ear of the Governor, and higher rank in a new regiment. Luck helped him to a lieutenant colonelcy in the course of the second year of the war, during which, from first to last, he was never in action, yet "the defenses of Washing-

ton" sounded big in print, and when after a hair-raising fright in the summer of '63, the Capital once more breathed free, when the gray columns fell back beaten from Gettysburg, with lavish generosity the Government rewarded the defenders who hadn't had to defend, and the end of the war found him a captain of regulars, with a Medal of Honor for presumable heroism, safely employed mustering and disbursing, and laying up treasures upon earth. Finally, as we have seen, he was sent to Arizona a major, and by this time Mrs. Piggott, who had long before tired of him, began to think it might be a good thing to shine in Army society, and so took to pursuit of him. There were suits at law where once the suits had been in love, and the absent major got the worst of the decision. A veritable harridan the lady proved, and then, in the extremities that followed, poor Piggott bethought him of his now influential and wealthy brother in Groveton. Surely if any man should be grateful to him it was he, Stetson, whom Piggott had relieved of a scold, a shrew and a rank extravagance. Piggott never dreamed how much the poor fellow had loved her, or how he loved, cherished and lied for that son. Lied *to* him, as it proved, for Stetson had taught the boy to believe that the woman who had robbed and wronged him, the father, had been an angel of love on earth, had long been an angel of light in heaven. Even such as Stetson have their vein of sentiment.

And this then was the whip the major found he might

crack when Stetson, the father, cursed and refused to aid him. Piggott swore he would reveal the mother's shame to Stetson the son. Brute that the younger brother had been in many a way, that was the one thing he could not stand. The boy wasn't worth the tenth part of the love and the lies that had been lavished on him. It may well be doubted if he would have been confounded or crushed by the tidings Piggott threatened to break to him, but Stetson, the father, saw fit to believe in the boy, and so temporized with the brother.

Piggott had come hoping to get money, for he needed it. He won a point or two, also, by promising Stetson evidence to disgrace Fane, whom Stetson hated for expelling his son. He was not, however, prepared to go the lengths the Stetsons planned. They lured Fane into the west grove at night, and had a trusted pair of fellow blackguards on hand to "do him up." The plan was simply to beat, kick, maim and mutilate the arrogant officer, but Piggott's nerve, or conscience, revolted when, at the last moment that plan revealed itself. The brutes might have done worse than they did but for two things. Piggott yelled for help; was grappled by Stetson, and in course of the struggle the latter's pistol went off and its bullet ripped Piggott's fleshy thigh, disabling him. The other thing was the prompt and sudden rush to the scene of an active young fellow, wielding a hickory stick with which, in one blow, he flattened out Stetson, junior; then furiously turned on the other "toughs"

and put them to flight, and finally, charging upon Stetson and his half-blinded son, as they stumbled with the crippled man to the faintly lighted shore, all as suddenly as he had appeared dropped his bludgeon and dove into the bushes. In that brief instant Piggott, the officer, and Hayden, the deserter, had recognized each other. It might be hard to say which was the more dismayed.

Stetson's boat was in waiting, old "Dummy" at the oars. Young Stetson took the carriage at Cedar Point, drove home and sent for aid. Old Stetson lugged Piggott to the Island; learned from him the identity of the rescuer; laid a trap for young Hayden, who was swiftly sandbagged a night or two later and borne a prisoner to the Roost, where now the astute politician conceived he had two valuable tools in his hands, both of whom could be made to do his bidding. But, in his triumph, he took to drink, lost his wits, bullied and threatened both. Piggott almost escaped him and was only overhauled after he had got safely to shore. In the furious quarrel that followed, Piggott was shot and almost killed. Then Stetson realized his awful dilemma. His son, one or two of their accomplices and this young man, Hayden, had all heard his threats to kill Piggott if he failed him, and now, though he never meant, with all his hatred, to go so far, he had fired what proved to be the fatal shot. He did not know that Piggott, either fearing some such fate or hating the man he had so wronged, had put in writing the mother's story and given it to the son, "To

be opened in case anything happens to me." Had Stetson known it he might have felt even less compunction.

But suspicion had not as yet attached to him. Piggott might not die, and Hayden could not betray him so long as he was safely penned at the Island. It might even be possible, by insinuation, to implicate Fane, and Stetson did his best so to do, with the result we have noted. Then came the collapse. The doctor told him Piggott was sinking. Stetson's nerve failed him and he sent his son away, preparing himself to follow as soon as he could silence young Hayden, who had been making mad attempts to escape, and who must have succeeded in signaling to the shore, for another strange young man had rowed to the Roost and inquired pertinaciously for him. Then came a mad interview with his prisoner, whom he sought both to bribe and bully, and who damned and defied him. The storm had begun to rage, and, in spite of it, came that dreaded pursuit from shore, with news for him that he dare not hear. In his horror he believed they had fathomed his secret and were come to seize him. The witness, at least, they should never have. Hayden's leg was in splints; it had been snapped below the knee in his furious struggles when waylaid and tossed into the boat. Stetson hurriedly half gagged and bound him; capsized his kerosene lamp in the huge pile of straw and empty boxes in his cellar; fled through a rear door into the night and, daring the gale, cut loose the boat; was tossed ashore at the east end an hour or

so later, drenched and half drowned, and found a refuge and means of escape to Chicago, but had not sense or strength to avoid liquor. The delirium that followed was bad enough, but the despair when, slowly rallying, he found his betrayer was his own son, beggars all description. After that Stetson never seemed to care what happened to him. Partial paralysis had developed on the instant, and the end could not be far off.

The strange young man from Hawkins's farm had an interesting tale to tell. He had served a long enlistment, had saved his money and had a substantial sum about him at the Colorado, where, while waiting for a boat to Yuma, he "sat into a small game"; found himself being systematically fleeced by certain experts among the troopers; made a fight for his money and then for his life, and would have lost both but for young Hayden, who sided with him even against his own sergeant—one of the experts—and in the drunken affray that followed downed that sergeant in self-defense. After that Arizona was no place for him. No officers were at hand to protect. His liberty, if not his life, was imperiled and he fled to San Bernardino with his friend. There they separated; Hayden to find a way to his kindred; Rollis, the honorably discharged soldier, to his old home near Groveton. There, some months after, a hunted man, Hayden reached him, saying his sister was now at the college, but that he had to meet her by stealth because of the presence of the lieutenant who had saved his life at

Tonto Pass. Hayden told Rollis of the affray at the west grove, and then, a few nights later, disappeared. Rollis, seeing, finally, the candle signals at the Island, conjectured that his friend had fallen into Stetson's clutches. Not knowing what else to do he strove to arouse Captain Fane, whose light was burning. He had urged Hayden to go to Fane and surrender, assuring him that when his story was known the desertion would be pardoned, but Hayden had seen poor devils sent in ball and chain to Alcatraz, and so dare not risk it. His luck, he said, was all too bad. Rollis said his repeated rappings at the window brought no response. Then he decided that the young officer was not in his room, and, while waiting at the rear watching for further signals from the Island, he heard footfalls in the wing and saw the gleam of a lamp. "The captain at last!" said he, and hurrying toward the side door was scared by the sight of a strange young lady, and ran back to the shrubbery. Later came two men hurrying, panting, along the shore path. At first he thought they were students out on a lark of some kind, and he kept in hiding until they got by. Then he knew they were older men, excited and muttering. From the few words he managed to hear he felt sure one of them was Stetson. They went on townward along the shore, a roundabout way home, but he saw now the purpose. Stetson appeared that night, late, at some of his customary haunts. An alibi, Rollis saw days after, might be

needed. He had heard no sound of shot or struggle westward toward Cedar Point, but then the wind was blowing the wrong way. He did hear, shortly after they passed, the sound of three shots, and saw the flash of one, half a mile farther east where a wooded point projected a few rods into the lake. This excited him and he hurried thither to investigate, following the path through the woods and so on into the main streets of town, and did not see a soul. There were boathouses and moored boats along the shore between the wood and Mrs. Jamieson's home. There were several lanes and streets leading to the thickly settled neighborhood, and he found no one, nor did he know who did the shooting, until long days after Fane explained it.

Fane had been warned that evening of a project to take all the doors of the gymnasium from their hinges, throw them out into the lake and set them adrift. He could sleep but little, anyway, and had been on the lookout for night prowlers during the week. It might be only another ambush. At all events he took his revolver; scouted the college grounds almost as far as Scullin's bailiwick; then, seeing a light at the Island and other lights along the shore toward town, he tramped eastward again. If boats were to be used he might see what boats were missing. Walking all the way to and beyond Woody Point, until the eastern outskirts of Groveton were reached, he could find no boat gone except one of Stetson's, and his were often over at the Island. Return-

ing through the wood he suddenly came, almost face to face, upon two hurrying men who at first recoiled, then rushed past him, hurling him heavily against a tree. Despite the instant pain and faintness that seized him as his wounded shoulder felt the shock, he whirled about and shouted something, probably, "Halt, you cowards!" and started in pursuit. Two harmless shots were fired by the runaways, and in his exasperation he drew and replied. Then in shame and weakness, both, gave up and sank upon a bench. He was still white and shaken when he got home. The revolver had seemed to discharge itself, before he had grasped the stock and while two fingers were yet along the cylinder. He doubted even having raised it to aim. He was examining the cylinder when he went to close the side door, and a light he had not noted earlier shone from the Island. He went the length of the back garden to study it and it disappeared. Returning he encountered Jane and—that was all.

But who was to tell Jane's story? Jane, who probably had suffered most of all! To Ronald, and to Ronald alone, at the time, that story was sobbed out with a world of sisterly shame, sorrow and contrition, and what she told him we others never knew till many a year thereafter.

There was another sore troubled spirit at Groveton the week that saw young Hoyt's convalescence assured, the father and daughter gone to Washington (where

State Senator Betts was not needed in the appeal for pardon for the young deserter) and Captain Fane restored to duty, if not to health. Certain few of the Faculty, who thought it the policy of wisdom to hold that the President could do no wrong, were striving to point out to him that the manifold symptoms of wrongdoing on part of Captain Fane were quite sufficient warrant for all the presidential strictures and measures at that officer's expense. "I don't know anything about that," said he, as he turned impatiently from such scholastic tender of sympathy. "It seems I was wrong, and I shall go to Mr.—er—Captain Fane and say so, and a—a—Beerbohm, the sooner you do likewise the better."

PART IV

EPILOGUE: AT THE POINT

EPILOGUE

AT THE POINT

ANOTHER summer, the second since that eventful November at Groveton, had dawned upon the Co-Educational. "Commencement," that blissful week of the college, had come and gone. Baccalaureate sermon was a thing of the past, and a thing by no means forgotten, for the President had the gift of words that lived long in memory. The biggest battalion ever mustered on the campus, up to that fair June day, had held its final review and parade, a famous general of the army coming with his staff to add *éclat* to the ceremonies and to compliment a complacent Board of Trustees on the remarkable progress made under their wise and intelligent direction, whereat the battalion swayed in mirth irrepressible, the first bit of unsteadiness observable that day, for it was well known that, until Colonel West's reappointment on the Board,—he having been temporarily superseded through adverse political complications,—Fane had had one long, up-hill tussle with that semi-bucolical body, "winning out," as the boys expressed it, only by sheer pluck and pertinacity. A remarkable scene was that that followed the dismissal of parade, when, at some prearranged signal, the student

soldiery broke ranks and swarmed about their young instructor, young despite certain filmy strands of gray that showed about his temples, and told perhaps more of hours of peril and trial than of years of life. They cheered him until the rafters of the old gymnasium trembled. They chaired West, his backer and champion, until that blushing veteran begged for permission to return once more to *terra firma*. The two years of almost ceaseless battle for right and recognition were ended, and Fane had swept his opponents successively from every point where they had made a stand. The President long since had learned the value to the college of such discipline as Fane had taught. The President still held war and preparation for war to be barbarous, but when such preparation resulted in such almost unheard-of things as courteous and respectful demeanor toward even the weaklings among the Faculty, and to vast improvement in student bearing at lecture, chapel and recitation, the President conceded that even from such iniquitous premises might spring conclusions well worth cultivating. Nine out of ten of the students had become Fane's adherents, even though some of the nine could have dispensed with some of the drills. The main opposition had come from Trustees representing the more remote districts, men who swallowed entire the stories told by the few students sent home for academic reasons, and were sure to lay their short-comings, either in studies or conduct, to the exactions of "the military prof." It

took time to combat these impressions—time, patience and self-discipline, and Ronald Fane had had himself to contend with and subdue before he could begin to convince the Trustees, some two or three of whom had held out to the last. It was not until the meeting of that second summer, the first since West's restoration to the Board (vice poor Stetson's local representative now deposed) that Fane's victory was finally complete. '

Meanwhile there had been many a trial of which the outside world heard nothing and Groveton but little. Of these, that fond but most unreasoning mother contributed, perhaps, the greatest number, and the burden fell almost equally on Ronald and on Jane. Long a power in garrison circles, never for a moment could the aging widow adapt herself to conditions wherein she was but a cipher. Bred to the army blue, if not the purple, poor Mrs. Fane could not be reconciled to what she termed "the dreary inanities" of life in a Western college town. She who had reigned as the social head, the wife of the commanding officer, the recipient of the attention, flattery and homage of all within her ken, actually suffered in the apparent neglect and indifference of these "narrow and unappreciative provincials." Poor Mrs. Fane could talk to her callers of little but the state in which she had dwelt, the distinguished personages she had intimately known, the tremendous entertainments that were the almost daily episodes of her life at Newport, at Washington and Old Point Comfort. Sim-

ple-minded, simple-mannered and simply-gowned women, wives and daughters of teachers, some of whom were eminent in their line, listened with little sympathy but exemplary patience to her jeremiads, but could find no other topic on which she would converse. Ronald and Jane had early discovered a mine of interest and instruction in the weekly lectures in science, history and art with which college circles were favored, but Mrs. Fane, after one dazzling display at a "Faculty Reception" and the discovery that Ronald was the only man in evening dress and herself the only woman "properly gowned," had refused to attend further functions of the kind, and had thereby brought not reproach, but infinite relief, to a circle that had suffered distinct sense of shock at her appearance—metropolitan and provincial theories as to what was or was not proper in feminine evening toilet being widely at variance. Sister Clare, bride-elect of the rector of Grace, had not ventured to appear *décolleté* (despite a warrantable predilection), thanks to a hint from Jane, whose attire had even been simplicity itself.

Mrs. Fane's one adventure in college society was long thereafter a fruitful topic of whispered remark in strictly feminine circles of Groveton, and when, soon thereafter, the sorrowing, complaining, suffering woman took to her bed and slowly pined and sadly wept her life away, it was not easy for college wives and mothers and sisters to do what they did do—come day after day,

some of them at least, to offer aid and comfort, to bring delicacies and tempting dishes and tender of service as nurse and helper, and Ronald Fane, who had thought these people cold, uncharitable, unsympathetic, found his heart going out to them in gratitude unspeakable, and Jane's deep eyes welled over time and again with gushing tears. The long and anxious months of that first spring and summer at last rolled by, and all that was mortal of a once queenly woman was borne away and laid by the side of the soldier husband who had preceded her to the land of shadows.

There was another stay and comfort in that dreary time for which Ronald felt most fervent thankfulness. West had returned at Christmastide, bringing with him to their final resting place all save memory that was left him of the invalid wife he had taken abroad. West had not been slow to see that his general's widow had not long to live, and in every gentle, unobtrusive way he sought to relieve the brother and sister of some part of their heavy burden. Accustomed to unlimited professional services from the army physicians, poor Mrs. Fane expected just as much from civilian practitioners, whose monthly bills could not but equal Ronald's monthly pay had customary rates been charged. Fane felt sure, despite good Dr. Stanton's stout denial, that West was accountable for that most moderate claim when at last Fane's demands were heard, and it was rendered, and Jane went off without a word

and hid somewhere that lovely afternoon. She so very seldom happened to meet West at any time.

Fane could have sworn that those railway passes for himself and family from Groveton to the seaboard and return were not, as represented, the spontaneous "compliments of the road." In a dozen other ways the influence and interest of West had been exerted, as Fane felt sure, in their behalf, and always to their material aid. Clare and her ecclesiastical Adonis never dreamed, though Jane and Ronald both suspected, that West was the instigator in a most unlooked-for raise of salary for the incumbent of Grace, not to mention a furnishing of the modest parsonage that would hardly have been suggested by the lambs of a sorely disappointed flock. Clare and her Honeyman were happily wed almost within the twelvemonth that marked the coming of the Fanes to Groveton, almost within the month that marked the going of the mother. Then, with Pet and her progeny and her husband far away, the brother and the one unmarried sister found themselves once more engrossed in their college duties and in each other.

And yet Jane knew he was not happy—there was a longing unspeakable, a void that she could never fill. They seldom spoke of Ethel Hoyt, perhaps because Jane felt sure he was forever thinking of her. They rarely heard from or even of her. When sufficiently recovered to hobble about young "Hayden" Hoyt, as they always thought of him, had been taken East, his father coming

for him and bringing him to see the Fanes, not once, but twice, before they left, and both times expressing fervent gratitude to the young officer for the valiant deed that had spared to him the life of his hot-headed boy, who in his turn had risked either life or liberty in the effort to rescue Fane. "Honors are easy," said Ronald, laughing, in bidding them good-by. "*Medals of Honor* are, at least," laughed Hayden, in reply, and told again how Sergeant Strang and others had ceased to wear their own after seeing Piggott's. And so, father and son, the latter pardoned and discharged from service, they went their way, and Ethel had not come at all. Fane had written to her, a long letter, and had finally sent to her a short one, telling her how deeply he appreciated her effort to save his name, even to the extent of involving her brother, but that was all. The mother and, in part, the sisters were still dependent on him. What right had he to speak of love when, confronting him at every turn, was—duty.

But Furlong was still there at the Point, and, in spite of all that flippant manner, still a staunch friend of Ronald Fane, and Furlong saw fit to write of things Fane read with eagerness, yet never fully answered. Furlong told how Hoyt, the absent brother on diplomatic service, had come home and wrung a settlement out of State Senator Betts, whom he had long suspected. Furlong couldn't say just what had been done, but it was common talk that Betts had been unmasked—had even been forced to

restore to the Hoyts certain securities he had sequestered. Betts had had his choice between that and Sing Sing. Once again the father and daughter were in comfortable circumstances, and had taken Hayden abroad. It made it all the more difficult for Fane to write, and Colonel West suggested that his surplus time might well be given to the study of the law, "something," said he, "few army officers know anything about." State college had no law department, but West's office and library were at his, Ronald's, disposal. "And then," said Mrs. Hazlett archly, when she heard of the arrangement, "it will be so easy for the colonel to drop in on Ronald winter evenings—just to quiz him." All the same Mrs. Hazlett heartily approved of Colonel West, who in turn was forever begging her and the captain to come out to Groveton and spend a few days with him. The big house, he said, was mighty lonely. How he wished that Fane and his sister could be induced to come and board with him for nothing instead of paying so much of their slender income into the coffers of Mrs. Jamieson!

So Fane had been studying law some sixteen months when this second June came round, and that sorely wounded shoulder was still a source of frequent torment, and West had long been hinting at the possibility of retirement from the profession of arms and a call to the bar. The army, said he, was but a poor place in peace time for even a soldier, and the son of a soldier, and, Ronald's ears being deaf to such semi-professional plead-

ings, the colonel had been having others in the shape of long talks with Jane—talks that grew longer with the sweet, spring-sunshiny days and the perfume of the lilacs, the glory of the apple blossoms, the melody of the myriad songsters flitting in and out among the fresh and whispering leaves, the mad frisk of the squirrel, the merry laughter of sportive childhood. The talks grew longer still with the long May days. The talks grew complicated with walks that started briskly and soon turned to saunter, and to silences that were eloquent to these two, strolling in the soft May twilight along that ever murmuring shore, and one night in early June Jane came to Ronald and clung to him awhile, and he pretended not to know what might be coming, when from his shoulder she looked up at him, shyly yet with shining eyes, and when at last it was told and there had been the long and longed-for exchange of confidences, Jane looked again into his face, asking still for more, and still there was something he would not speak of, and she who had striven once to interpose—to turn him from that other girl who had once seemed destined to come between them—now sought a way to turn him yet again, and not by word or sign would he encourage her.

And so when the last good-night had to be said and the “Senator” was booming the hour of eleven, and all was silence on the hill, she could brook the barriers no longer. The cry came from the depths of her happy yet yearning heart: “Oh, Ron, Ron! *now* won’t you go to her?”

There are so many sisters, Heaven be thanked, who think as Jane did, that all her brother had to do was ask and it should be given, to seek and he should find his heart's desire.

It was, at last and after long trial, Jim Hoyt's graduating June, and in those days of yore they used, most uselessly, to hold the class in cadet uniform and much impatience and little discipline for a week or so after examinations were over and the standing settled, awaiting final orders from Washington; and so it happened that, in ample time to see "last parade" at the Point, Ronald Fane arrived there one exquisite evening in mid-June, two days only after he had said adieu to the blue battalion at Groveton, and Furlong met him at the south dock and drove him, bag and baggage, to his bachelor quarters in the angle. "Jimmy Hoyt," said he, "has just managed to skin through, though he's swamped in demerit and sixty-first in engineering—they graduate sixty-two. Another month of it would have been the death of the old man. He looked pretty well petered out, Fane; so does she."

And later that evening, as with shrill, soldier melody the drums and fifes went echoing through the resounding sallyport, signaling their martial tattoo, for the first time since the wintry day at Groveton, nearly eighteen months before, Ronald Fane looked upon the face that had lived day and night in his dreams, and saw that, however haplessly expressed, Furlong's descriptive was not entirely

unwarranted. Ethel Hoyt, leading and half-supporting her father, came slowly up the pathway from the westward hedge where they had been bidding "Young Hopeful" good-night. With apparently no more pressing anxiety on earth than that of reporting his return at the cadet guardhouse before the last roll of the drums, Mr. Jimmy Hoyt, with a dozen other light-heeled, light-hearted young warriors, went dancing away in double time down the road to the barracks, and the same moonlight that revealed the swift flashing white trousers, fading gradually in the dim distance, fell upon the only object sought by Ronald's gaze—upon those wan, yet beautiful, features close at hand, upon soft, uplifted eyes, filled with troubled thought and care.

A great personage had come to the hotel for the night. The band had been playing in his honor. The halls, parlors and piazzas had been crowded with a joyous throng of visitors and more than the customary sprinkling of officers and cadets. Graduating exercises were to be held upon the morrow, and out of the frying pan of his cadet career Brother Jim was to jump into the fire of subaltern life, a full-fledged lieutenant of cavalry. Ethel's heart sank at the mere thought of it. Hayden had told her what trooper work was like in Arizona, and a friend at court had confided to her that Jim's assignment was to the very regiment in which that other had so nearly ended his days. True, the old regiment was, for the time at least, done with Arizona. True, "Old Catnip" was still at its

head and could be relied upon, said their informant, to "take the nonsense out of Jimmy." But between these two, Fred Hayden and James DePeyster, the perils of the one, the errors, escapades and extravagances of both, the days of the father would probably not be too long in the land which the Lord had given him, while those of the sister had been burdened with a weary load. And yet she loved them, as women will, better probably than that light of the consular and diplomatic service, Andrew, junior, in whose care finally Hayden had been launched as sub-assistant secretary under the shield of the United States in the consulate at Coblenz. In the year or more of almost unaided looking after an aging and much broken father, and two such happy-go-lucky, helpless brothers, small wonder was it that Ethel Hoyt's once rounded cheek had thinned and paled, and that there had been but little time for thought of others.

Yet thought there had been, and sorrowful thought, and much of it. The girl does not live who likes it in a man that his manner should abruptly change from the devotional, even worshipful, to the constrained and distant, albeit at her suggestion, and when such suggestion grew from the circumstance of Ethel Hoyt's relations with the Co-Educational, and those relations had abruptly and finally terminated, there was no reason, that she could see, why constraint and distance should not also end. But instead had come that letter, almost formal—how was she to know of that other letter, long, grateful, glowing, that

told so much that she, being a woman, would have loved to hear—that letter that his cooler judgment and his sense of duty told him he had no right to send? Locked in his heart, and an inner drawer of his old desk, that letter still lay hidden. Pride, foolish pride, added still another bolt and bar when later he heard of her bettered fortune. On that head he need have had no least compunction—there was barely enough to keep them from worrying.

And so for nearly eighteen months Ethel Hoyt had been schooling herself to consider Ronald Fane as a memory, even while her heart rebelled that he should so readily accept the assignment. She was thinking of him as she turned from the gateway to her father's aid, for Jim's last joyous word was a wish that he might be in the same troop with Captain Fane. She was thinking of him even as she strove cheerily to reassure her father, who looked upon the Indian frontier as something little short of the Inferno, and Jimmy's chances of extinction as already settled. She was thinking of him even as she reached the steps and recalled the glorious rides that began and ended there. She was thinking of him and how, almost reverently, he had lifted her from saddle and stood her on that lower step—where now he stood in person, and civilian dress, smiling and with extended hands. She ceased to think, for everything seemed dizzily reeling round, in the midst of which, with sure foot and one firm hand, at least, he was supporting the father up the stair. It enabled her to fall behind and regain her breath, composure and ideas.

She was herself again when they saw that father safely seated and in converse with a former crony of the "Street." She was therefore, in spite of being herself, far from being the Ethel he hoped to see. She was again Miss Hoyt.

Nevertheless, Ronald Fane had come for a purpose and with resolute mind. She felt it, knew it, when he offered his arm and led her to the north piazza and that glorious outlook over the northward reach of the Hudson—led her to the very spot where they had stood that night in June three years before. Many people were seated along the west and southward front, but few were here, and these few were paired and absorbed, as well they might be. She was trembling a bit, for there had been no warning of his coming, and she who had long months before resented his silence, now, womanlike, was maneuvering to check his words. She who had quit Groveton and the "Co-Educational" indignant and affronted, stood plying him with questions as to all manner of people for whom she could feel but faint appreciation. How was Dr. Parsons and good Mrs. Parsons? and oh, *how* was Miss Hinton, and had Miss Hinton ever forgiven her for the man of straw that dangled at Miss Hinton's casement? Innocent as was Miss Hoyt of all complicity in that exploit, she had not escaped suspicion in Miss Hinton's austere mind. At least the perpetrators were none other than Miss Hoyt's own pupils. There was no denying that. Neither was there way of proving. Finally Miss Hoyt

wanted to know all about Mrs. Tremaine, and the handsome rector, and Miss Fane. Was Miss Fane still at Mrs. Jamieson's? No, Miss Fane was living at the Rectory now. Oh, how very much better that was! Yes, very much, said Fane, yet only temporary. Indeed! Were they planning to keep house now—Captain Fane and his devoted sister? She certainly was devotion itself. The devotion was duly conceded, also that Jane was contemplating housekeeping, and there was indeed prospect of his being included in the very charming arrangement, as Colonel West had been so kind as to suggest his coming to live with them, and then, of course, Miss Hoyt was all felicitation for the colonel and for Jane. It was an ideal match! They were people of such strong and marked character,—so admirably suited to each other, etc., and all the time Miss Hoyt was conscious of the fact that he saw, perfectly well, through her girlish artifice,—saw and knew she was hardly conscious of what she was saying, and presently the soldier in him spoke in spite of her, and with hands that trembled even as did her own, he seized and held them and bent toward her, as she leaned against the railing.

“Three years ago, here, on this very spot, I tried to tell you what I’ve come to tell you now. No, Ethel, you *must* listen to me!” he pleaded, for she struggled to free her hand and check him. “But everything seemed to interpose. You went one way, I another; and when we met at Groveton you know that duty alone—duty to the mother

and sisters dependent on me—kept me silent. Last week—ah, listen, Ethel, Jane looked into my face as she told me her happiness and——”

But she would not listen. She lifted up her head, the sweet, pale face turning full upon him, earnest, intent, resolved, and, though her voice was low, it was firm and strong.

“ You knew your duty, Captain Fane, and I have mine. I will not hear another word.”

And so she left him ; and yet, in all the light and glamour and gladness about her, in the midst of all the mirth and music and rejoicing after graduating parade and at the graduating ball, her deep eyes sought him on every hand as the hours sped by and he never appeared. It was Brother Jim who broke the spell. All excitement and importance he came fairly sliding to her side. “ Great news, Ethel ! I’m assigned to the —th, Fane’s regiment. The whole Sioux Nation are out ! Crook’s called for help ! Every mother’s son of us is needed ! Fane started at noon ! ” Then duty had summoned him again.

A woeful summer was that that followed. Even as the joyous class was ringing its parting cheer from the crowded deck of the day boat, and all the rocky heights about the Point were alive with the flutter of kerchief and the frantic waving of hats and helmets, caps and class banners, away out among the foothills of the wildly beautiful Big Horn, along other bold and wooded heights, in countless hordes the red warriors were swarming in hate

and fire on the battling lines of Crook. Another week and in even greater force and fury they had engulfed the fated squadrons of Custer, leaving not a soldier soul to tell the tale. And then while, all rejoicing, the nation was flocking to Philadelphia and the first great exposition in our land, the stubborn bands of Sitting Bull and their kindred warriors, Sioux and Cheyenne, led on from one wild range to another, luring the pursuing columns farther and farther away from camp and supplies, rarely facing them in fair fight, but ever enticing, to the end that, after long weeks of marching and scouting through blistering heat or pitiless rain, through storm and tempest, hail and prairie fire, through ashen "bad lands" where even sage and greasewood could not grow, where the turbid streams were thick with mud and alkali, where game was scarce and grass was gone—burned skillfully away—where wagons could not follow and pack mules mired in quicksand, without shelter of any kind and presently without rations, their scanty clothing in rags, their boots worn to shreds, gaunt and famished, officers and men faring and sharing alike, the so-called "dapper dandies" of the old regiment fell upon their starving horses, when even prairie dogs could not be found, and ate the luckless beasts that for days had been too weak to bear a rider's weight. "Take the nonsense out of Brother Jim," indeed! There were long weeks in which no word whatever came from the column, and mothers and wives, sisters and sweethearts in distant homes watched and prayed and shuddered,

thinking over the awful fate of Custer's men and dreading with each new-coming day to hear the same of Crook's. In late June the regiment had passed through Denver, northward bound. In July it had struck the Cheyennes on the War Bonnet and chased them to the agency. In early August it was at the Big Horn; in late August on the Yellowstone, and then it dove into the wilderness to be heard of again at last in the Black Hills, after stirring, spirited battles with Crazy Horse and his bands—drenched, dripping, haggard and well-nigh unrecognizable, yet tough and hardy in spite of all, and finally in the bleak November came Jimmy's exultant missive from old Red Cloud Agency: "Disarmed the Sioux to-day. Home on leave Thanksgiving," and nothing would do but that the sub-assistant secretary of the Consulate at Coblenz should also get leave and come across the Atlantic that the father might have his two boys with him at least once more. Despite the Indian experience of Arizona, Hayden Hoyt could only with difficulty be held at his post. He was simply wild to be once more with the old regiment, even as a private, and mad with envy of Jim, actually an officer in his old troop.

But if Ronald Fane had been the hero of one boy's talk before, what was he now with both lads home—Jim still gaunt as a greyhound, and as hungry, but idolatrous as a spaniel? Oh, Crook was all right. Crook was great. So was Atherton—so was old Stannard, their major. And there were rattling good soldiers in that little cavalry brig-



"STIRRING, SPIRITED BATTLE WITH CRAZY HORSE AND HIS BANDS"

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ade and the wonderful command of infantry that, "hoofing it" from start to finish, used to outmarch them day after day on empty stomachs, because they had no horses to tow along. But Jim Hoyt had just one hero and idol, his troop commander Fane, and Ethel, who had had to listen to Hayden's panegyrics all the winter months that followed their eastward flitting from Groveton, had now to hear both lads, from Thanksgiving until after Christmas, when each was summoned back to his station, and she was once again alone in her vigil with her father and mother—the latter but recently restored to them from long illness—alone with them and her thoughts of the lover whose suit she had utterly refused to hear.

And then there came a time, late the following spring, when again the boys sought leave, Jim hastening homeward from Nebraska in answer to telegraphic summons from that "friend at court"—and the War Department. It was not unexpected. Ethel's letters had been preparing him for the inevitable, and yet when it came it was all so mercifully swift and sudden, so peaceful and so serene.

They took them to the seashore for a while after the loved old father had been laid away, the mother mourning as ever, and as ever leaving to Ethel all matters of management and business. Then Jim had to hurry to his troop, for once again the regiment was afield and Indian chasing all summer long. Then "the diplomatic corps" persuaded the family, and with little difficulty, that mother

would be happier with her boys in the foreign life she loved and lived so long. To them, therefore, and to the Rhineland she voyaged before the harvest moon had waned, leaving Ethel visiting with old family friends until all the business details could be settled. "Ethel would follow later," though Jim had his own ideas about that. Then again came the chill autumn days on the wide mountain waves of Wyoming,—the dreamy, delightful Indian summer in the Hudson Highlands, and one soft, hazy afternoon a fair-faced girl, still wan and sad and in deep mourning, stood leaning against the railing of the old north piazza, gazing silently over that incomparable vista of earth and flood and sky. Two big tears seemed brimming in her soft eyes. Someone, who had come searching through the deserted hallway, faltered at the door, irresolute, unwilling to intrude, yet, eager and rejoicing—a woman burdened with a blissful duty—and a letter. At last, almost on tiptoe, she approached, and the girl started, turned and smiled upon her as she came.

"A letter for you, Ethel."

"For me, Mrs. Hazlett?"

"For you, and for no one else," was the answer, and the bearer vanished, leaving the bulky little packet in hands that suddenly grew tremulous.

"I am sending you the letter, [were the first words that met her eyes as she opened the outer envelope] written nearly three years ago when, to save me, you would have accused your brother. Last year when I tried to speak you would not hear me, Ethel.

Now will you read? I go again to Groveton to take up the work I left when needed in the field. Read, and tell me may I come first to you."

She did not know he was even then so near, nor had he told her. What was more natural, when he heard of Hazlett's detail at the Point, than that he should follow on to see them, his ever devoted friends? A summer of splendid, vigorous life had the regiment enjoyed, a summer of scouting through the grandest country in all America, a summer of radiant sunshine and mountain air, a country rich in scenic beauty, with white-capped peak and wooden range and green rolling foothill and flashing, foam-crested torrent on every side, and when the early snow clouds settled down upon the cliffs and the white, filmy veil came sifting slowly earthward, blanketing the game trails and the upland prairies, the recall sounded at the distant outposts, and by easy stages the regiment came riding jauntily homeward from beneath the morning shadows of Cloud Peak, across the swirling Big Horn, rounding the base of Heart Mountain, dipping again and again in the deep ravines that seamed the eastward slope of the Shoshone Range—the valleys of the Meeyero, Meeteesee and Gray Bull, still home of the elk and the buffalo. Then, over the huge barrier of the Owl Creek Mountains and into the broad lands of the Wind River, with the grand triplet sentinels of the Tetons standing guard at the west, and the peaks of Fremont glistening against the southern skies; and then the long, winding

way through the sheep herders' paradise, and the clamber over the green bulwark to the Sweetwater beyond, and thence, through Devil's Gate, to rejoice again at sight of the dear old Platte, frisking northward to meet them, and then obligingly turning away southeastward to be escort and companion through days of brisk, exhilarating ride, through starry nights of song and slumber, on past Fetterman Heights, past La Prêle, La Bonté and on to hospitable old Laramie, and here "the Chief" summoned Fane to headquarters and bade him push ahead to Cheyenne and Chicago, with dispatches for the division commander and a four weeks' leave for himself. Many a letter had met them at Laramie, and Jimmy Hoyt had come to tell him of Hazlett's orders to the Military Academy—of Mrs. Hazlett's September with Ethel at 'Sconset, of Ethel's being with the Hazletts even now. What more natural, indeed, than that Fane should wish to see these old and tried and trusted friends before once again reporting for duty to the selfsame, yet very differently greeting, President at Groveton? Long enough he stopped at his quarters for that letter and for needed raiment in which to return to civil life and civilization. Then, within another day, he was speeding after it. Ethel Hoyt had barely time to read it—thrice, to dream over it at all, or even whisper that her heart said "Come," when, sun tanned, vigorous, brimful of the ozone and energy of the wide frontier, just where they had parted in the old north piazza just the year ago, he stood before her and

read surrender in her soft, yet shining, and at last uplifted eyes.

There was a house warming when the Hazletts moved from the hotel into the new quarters, and a welcoming "hop" at the officers' club, and full uniform was the order of the evening. There were insignia of famous military societies on the uniform of many a senior among the officers present—the Loyal Legion, the Army of the Potomac, "Sheridan's Cavalry" and the like shone resplendent under the globe lights, but, between the double row of cavalry buttons on the breast of Ronald Fane hung a medal in dull bronze, surmounted, in miniature, by the national flag. There was none to match it in the crowded room, though it came to others later, and though there were others there that had well deserved, yet never received it.

"Where's your medal?" Hazlett had bluntly asked when Fane came down from his room.

"I said I shouldn't wear it," answered Fane.

"I said he *should*," quietly remarked a young lady whose half mourning was to keep her from the dance at which Fane must needs appear, though it seems he did not long to remain.

"Then—somebody'll have to pin it on," said the owner.

"It takes a woman to do that," quoth Hazlett. "Perhaps I'd better call—my wife," whereat he vanished, grinning, and Fane stepped forward, the priceless trifle in his hand.

She stood beneath the flag-draped archway to the dark dining room beyond, the firelight from the open hearth, the soft gleam from the chandelier and sconces, falling full upon her sweet face, from which the pallor and the sorrow had vanished almost in a night. There was even a faint flush upon the cheeks. There was radiance in the quick, upward glance as gently he drew her forward to the fireside, then, smiling, "stood attention."

"It's the way Dolan and I had to stand first time it was ever pinned on," said he, "and I've never worn it since."

So, facing him, she leaned her white hands on his breast, his deep eyes glowing upon her as, trembling just a little bit, the slender fingers drove the stout pin through the blue and snapped it in its seat. Then, daintily, they smoothed and patted the soft ribbon; then, slowly, they would have come away when, suddenly, his arms were about her, holding her close and strong, the blessed trophy of his soldier valor almost crushed into the soft fabric that fluttered above her heart. Even then, not satisfied, suddenly again he loosed his hold; masterfully he seized the soft, white hands; lifted them over the glittering shoulder-knots until they *had* to clasp about his neck; then once again his arms enfolded and held her, and his lips, scorning faint struggle and denial, sought and found hers and claimed their own before he murmured:

"I know what my medal's worth—at last."



Medal of honor.

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